United Nations S/PV.7166

Security Council

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Official communiqué of the 7166th (closed) meeting of the Security Council

Held in private at Headquarters, New York, on Wednesday, 30 April 2014, at 3 p.m.

In accordance with rule 55 of the provisional rules of procedure of the Security Council, the following communiqué was issued through the Secretary-General in place of a verbatim record:

"At its 7166th meeting, held in private on 30 April 2014, the Security Council considered the item entitled 'Implementation of the note by the President of the Security Council (S/2010/507)'.

"The President invited the representatives of Albania, Azerbaijan, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Brazil, Colombia, Croatia, Cuba, the Czech Republic, Denmark, Djibouti, Egypt, Estonia, Finland, Germany, Greece, Guatemala, Hungary, India, Indonesia, the Islamic Republic of Iran, Ireland, Japan, Latvia, Liechtenstein, Lebanon, Malaysia, Malta, Mauritania, Morocco, Namibia, the Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Pakistan, Peru, the Philippines, Portugal, Romania, Serbia, Slovakia, Slovenia, South Africa, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, the Syrian Arab Republic, Thailand, Togo, Turkey, Ukraine and Zimbabwe to participate in the meeting in accordance with rule 37 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure.

"The President invited the representative of the Delegation of the European Union to the United Nations to participate in the meeting in accordance with rule 39 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure.

"In accordance with the provisional rules of procedure and the previous practice in this regard, the President invited the representative of the Observer State of Palestine to the United Nations to participate in this meeting.

"In accordance with the provisional rules of procedure and the previous practice in this regard, the President invited the representative of the Observer State of the Holy See to the United Nations to participate in this meeting.

"The members of the Council had an exchange of views."

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United Nations S/PV.7167

Security Council

Sixty-ninth year

Provisional

7167th meeting
Friday, 2 May 2014, noon
New York

President:	Mr. Oh Joon/Ms. Paik Ji-ah	(Republic of Korea)
Members:	Argentina	Mrs. Perceval
	Australia	Mr. Quinlan
	Chad	Mr. Cherif
	Chile	Mr. Barros
	China	Mr. Liu Jieyi
	France	Mr. Araud
	Jordan	Mr. Hmoud
	Lithuania	Ms. Murmokaitė
	Luxembourg	Ms. Lucas
	Nigeria	Mrs. Ogwu
	Russian Federation	Mr. Churkin
	Rwanda	Mr. Gasana
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Sir Mark Lyall Grant
	United States of America	Ms. Power

Agenda

Letter dated 13 April 2014 from the Permanent Representative of the Russian Federation to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council (S/2014/264)

This record contains the text of speeches delivered in English and of the interpretation of speeches delivered in the other languages. The final text will be printed in the *Official Records of the Security Council*. Corrections should be submitted to the original languages only. They should be incorporated in a copy of the record and sent under the signature of a member of the delegation concerned to the Chief of the Verbatim Reporting Service, room U-506.

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The meeting was called to order at 12.10 p.m.

Expression of thanks to the outgoing President

The President: As this is the first meeting of the Security Council in the month of May 2014, I should like to take this opportunity to pay tribute, on behalf of the Council, to Her Excellency Mrs. U. Joy Ogwu, Permanent Representative of Nigeria, for her service as President of the Council during the month of April. I am sure that I speak for all members of the Council when I express my deep appreciation to Ambassador Ogwu and her team for the great diplomatic skill with which they conducted the Council's business last month.

Adoption of the agenda.

The agenda was adopted

Letter dated 13 April 2014 from the Permanent Representative of the Russian Federation to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council (S/2014/264)

The President: In accordance with rule 37 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite the representative of Ukraine to participate in this meeting.

In accordance with rule 39 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite Mr. Jeffrey Feltman, Under-Secretary-General for Political Affairs, to participate in this meeting.

The Security Council will now begin its consideration of the item on its agenda.

I give the floor to Mr. Jeffrey Feltman.

Mr. Feltman: Since we last met to discuss Ukraine (S/PV.7165), on Tuesday, 29 April, although a number of areas in the country remain calm, we have seen a further severe deterioration of the situation in parts of eastern and southern Ukraine. Recent developments in those areas threaten a further destabilization of the country and the region, as well as the unity of Ukraine itself.

In more than a dozen cities in Donetsk oblast and Luhansk, an increasing number of buildings are being held by armed groups. Of most immediate concern is the situation in the eastern city of Sloviansk. That city of 125,000 people in Donetsk oblast has been occupied by armed insurgents since 12 April. According to Ukraine's Ministry of Defence, during the ongoing operations by the authorities two helicopters were shot down overnight, with at least one pilot killed. A number of other casualties have also been reported on the ground on both sides. The total number cannot be completely verified at this stage. The acting Minister of the Interior has stated that a number of roadblocks around the city have been removed, but from the media we understand that tense standoffs continue in parts of and around the city.

At the same time, the seven military monitors from the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) and accompanying Ukrainian military staff being held by gunmen in Sloviansk remain in detention, despite repeated calls for their release. To that end, we understand that Russian President Putin dispatched a special presidential envoy to assist in the freeing of the hostages. I reiterate the Secretary-General's call to those responsible for their abduction to release them immediately, unconditionally and unharmed.

The crisis has also escalated in the Donetsk oblast and in Donetsk itself, where yesterday, on 1 May, self-declared separatists seized the regional prosecutor's office. There have also been reports that the Ukrainian authorities have banned Russian passenger airplanes from flying to Donetsk and Kharkiv. We have also read reports of clashes during a pro-unity demonstration in the southern city of Odessa.

I would like to share with the Council key elements of the Secretary-General's statement that is being issued at the same time that we are meeting:

> "The Secretary-General reiterates his grave concern over the deteriorating situation in regions of east and south Ukraine. Escalating violence and reported further loss of life in the city of Sloviansk today is a stark reminder of how dangerous the situation has become. Expansion of militia activities and ongoing seizures of public buildings by unidentified armed groups undercut the letter and spirit of the 17 April Geneva statement. He therefore urges all sides to exercise maximum restraint and appeals to those with grievances to voice them peacefully, so as to avoid more bloodshed. He calls for all parties to respect fully Ukraine's sovereignty and territorial integrity.
>
> "The Secretary-General once again calls on those responsible for the capture and detention of OSCE military monitors and accompanying

Ukrainian staff to release them immediately, unconditionally and unharmed.

"The Secretary-General stresses that a diplomatic solution is the only way out of this crisis and that all sides must redouble their efforts to revive the spirit of compromise displayed during the 17 April Geneva talks."

Finally, as I informed the Council in my last briefing, given the deteriorating situation in the country, the Secretary-General has asked me to go back to Kyiv next week. I will also be going to Moscow. In both cities, I will continue to reiterate the Secretary-General's message of restraint and immediate return to dialogue, including direct and constructive dialogue between Moscow and Kyiv.

The President: I thank Mr. Feltman for his briefing.

I now give the floor to the members of the Security Council.

Mr. Churkin (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): The Russian delegation called for today's emergency meeting of the Security Council with a view to considering the resumed punitive military operations undertaken by the authorities of the Kyiv regime, involving terrorists, the pro-fascist Right Sector and other ultranationalist organizations against their own people in south-eastern Ukraine. A sub-unit of the Ukrainian army is using tanks, other heavy artillery and military helicopters to launch rocket strikes against protesters and land troops. The first blood has already been spilled and reports are coming in about the killed and wounded. If the criminal misadventures of the Kyiv clique are not swiftly stopped, a catastrophic outcome for Ukraine cannot be averted. We have warned of this on many occasions.

Punitive measures against its own people bear witness to the current Kyiv Government's inability or unwillingness to fulfil its obligations under the Geneva declaration of 17 April to ensure a speedy end to all violence and the launch of broad national dialogue, with the participation of all regions and political forces. If anyone entertained any doubts, it is now clear that the many statements of the so-called Government of Ukraine regarding its intention to begin nationwide dialogue in the search of settlement to the far-reaching crisis are nothing but hypocrisy. The regime in Kyiv, having abrogated the agreement of 21 February, is now openly violating its commitments under the Geneva declaration of 17 April, which require an urgent measures to end to all violence.

In essence, at a time when Russia is striving to de-escalate and settle the crisis and — at the request of our Western partners and in cooperation with the leadership of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) — recently sent a representative of the President of the Russian Federation to Donetsk oblast in order to find a solution to the situation of the military specialists from several European countries, the Kyiv regime, with the support of its Western sponsors, has launched the full-scale use of military force, effectively annihilating any prospects for the implementation of the Geneva agreement.

We are particularly concerned about information that, in the course of the punitive operations undertaken by the Ukrainian armed forces and illegal ultranationalist groups, English has been heard being spoken on the radio and English-speaking foreigners have been identified among those attacking in Sloviansk. We insist that all outside interference in the events in Ukraine is unacceptable. It is time for our Western colleagues to think twice, reason with their mentees in Ukraine, and stop toying with the destiny of the Ukrainian people to determine their own geopolitical goals.

How else can we interpret yet another blatant example of the double standards wielded by the United States? Following the numerous attempts of Washington, D.C., to tell Russia where and how its military should be properly deployed in its own territory, the White House has now been offended by our appeal to the Kyiv Government to withdraw its forces from eastern Ukraine. I recall that Washington, D.C., used frequently to ask former President Yanukovich of Ukraine not to use force against his people, and threatened him with all sorts of consequences. Now, however, in a strange twist of logic, force may and must be used against civilians by a Government that enjoys no legitimacy.

The High Representative of the European Union is not far behind her United States colleagues, philosophizing about the State's monopoly on the use of force. In the current context in Ukraine, her statement can only be characterized as provocative and inflammatory. It would seem that not only did the High Representative not participate in signing the Geneva declaration, but that she did not read it. In helping those who organized the coup d'état in Kyiv to crush the

protesters, the United States and the European Union bear great responsibility for effectively destroying the path to a peaceful solution to the crisis.

Against that backdrop, the categorical refusal of Washington, D.C., to support the continuation of dialogue between the representatives of Kyiv and of south-eastern Ukraine, under the auspices of the OSCE, would hardly seem coincidental in its contravention of the Geneva declaration fo 17 April. What could be a more striking example than the fact that the United States is bent on the use of force? We call on Kyiv, its enablers and the signers of the Geneva declaration, the United States and the European Union, not to commit a fatal error and to make a sober assessment at all possible consequences of their actions. We call firmly on the West to end its destructive policy concerning Ukraine, and on the self-proclaimed authorities in Kyiv to swiftly halt all punitive operations and other measures against the people, free political prisoners and guarantee full freedom for journalists. That would represent a genuine process of de-escalation.

There is a need for the urgent organization of authentic and equitable political dialogue, with the participation of all regions, to reach mutual agreement on the future of the country, rather than pretend to draft reforms within the small circle of self-styled Government of winners. Those who gave the criminal order to unleash bloodshed will bear full responsibility for whatever happens in Ukraine.

Mr. Araud (France) (*spoke in French*): I pay tribute to the Permanent Representative of Nigeria and her team in their presidency of the Council for last month.

Here we are once again, meeting to address the crisis in Ukraine. Each time, the Council flaunts its divisions and hence its powerlessness while that unhappy country sinks into anarchy.

Let us return to the facts. In eastern Ukraine, armed groups are gradually seizing the cities. They enjoy no crowds of supporters other than a few hundred demonstrators. Their heavy weaponry disqualigies them as mere sympathetic activists. Russian officers strut on local television. Observers of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe and jouralists have been taken hostage. Numerous people have been detained; more seriously, increasingly credible allegations are surfacing of enforced disappearances, killings and torture. These thugs have refused to implement the Geneva agreement that was intended to restore the Ukrainian State on its territory.

What has Ukraine done? After showing a restraint that no other State would have exhbited in the presence of these attacks on its authority — attacks that have been organized, supported and justified by a neighbour — it decided to use its army and police against the armed gangs spreading a sense of insecurity at the expense of people most of whom do not support them. These gangs have so little in common with the spontaneous coelescence of local groups that they were able to shoot down a helicopter with a surface-to-air missile — which, it must be acknowledged, is not commonly found at the Kharkiv market.

By what right would anyone meddle in the internal affairs of a State that is only seeking to restore its violated sovereignty? At the bilateral level, we can recall the need to act with restraint, but so far there is no evidence that it has not done so. Going any further would be to violate the Charter of the United Nations. I know that reality has left that scenario far behind. Having trampled the principle of the territorial integrity of States, the same can be done to the principle of non-interference in the internal affairs of States. After all, in sin, it is only the first step that bears a cost, as the moralists say.

Russia has proven that by renouncing, one after the other, the principles underlying international life. But it still has a few regrets as it spirals downwards, so it tries, against all credibility, to blame the other. It invokes the agreement of 21 February, which it did not endorse and discovered only when it was too late. It brandishes the Geneva agreement, for the achievement of which it made no effort. Lastly, it makes accusations that would be comical under different circumstances: the Nazis are in Kyiv, English speakers have infiltrated the ranks of Ukrainians — which makes me jealous that no French speakers are included — and, finally, the European Union is responsible for the violence.

No, the facts are much more simple. In reality, Russia has opened a Pandora's box. They have let the demon of nationalism escape. They have unleashed bands of thugs on Ukraine. The only alternatives they are offering Kyiv are capitulation or partition — and they are suddenly discovering that this mixture can go completely out of control; that nationalism can oblige them to do what they do not want to do; that the thugs act like thugs and, finally, that Ukraine, faced with the

impossible choice they wish to impose on it, can hit back. At that point, the fire-starting firefighters shriek loudly to try to make us forget that in fact it was them who chose this road, and that it is Russia who should retreat.

For our part, we have been saying for weeks that we are seeking a de-escalation — we want a de-escalation. But de-escalation implies that Russia will calm the armed groups it is equipping and training; that it will see that the OSCE observers are freed — having still not publicly condemned their capture in the first place — and open negotiations with Ukraine; that free elections will be held on 25 May under international supervision in order to give the Kyiv authorities indisputable legitimacy; and that negotiations begin between Russia and Ukraine. Compromises are possible. Ukraine is aware of the stakes and is ready, and the countries of Europe, the most closely concerned in this crisis, are too. Constitutional reform that responds to the concerns of the people of eastern Ukraine and respects Ukraine's sovereignty is quite conceivable. But for that to happen, we have to put an end to this bad spy thriller, in which the Minister for Foreign Affairs is replaced by an information service when a crisis has to be resolved. What we need today is not a vodka-loving James Bond but diplomats who can return to the principles that form the foundations of international life.

Sir Mark Lyall Grant (United Kingdom): I congratulate the Republic of Korea on its assumption of the presidency of the Security Council for the month of May. I would also like to thank Ambassador Ogwu and the Nigerian team for their admirable stewardship of the Council in April.

Thank you for convening this meeting, Mr. President. The Russian Federation has described this morning's events in eastern Ukraine as a punitive military operation against peaceful activists. This is yet again a gross distortion of the facts. The Ukrainian Government has the right, and indeed the responsibility, to uphold the rule of law and protect its citizens in its own territory. Of course, in doing so it should at all times act in a proportionate and measured way. The actions undertaken this morning by Ukrainian security forces in and around Sloviansk appear to have been just that, in an effort to relieve the city from the armed groups, sponsored and controlled by Russia, that have been terrorizing the local population. We urge them to continue to make every effort to ensure that the risks to civilians are minimized.

But let us be absolutely clear. There is no Council member sitting around this table that would allow its towns to be overrun by armed militants. None of us would abrogate responsibility for the protection of citizens on our own territory who are being intimidated and brutalized by heavily armed groups backed by a neighbouring country. Proportionate is not the same as passive. The scale of Russian hypocrisy is breathtaking. Russia stoutly supports, and indeed arms, the most repressive regimes in the world, notably Syria, a regime that brutally represses dissent without any sense of restraint or concern for the protection of civilians. Russia's synthetic indignation over Ukraine's proportionate and measured actions convinces no one. Russian claims that these are peaceful activists are simply not credible. Peaceful activists do not have the means or the capability to shoot down three Ukrainian military helicopters, reportedly using man-portable air defence systems. The use of such sophisticated weaponry against Ukrainian forces reaffirms our assessment that the armed groups in eastern Ukraine include professionals funded, equipped and directed by Russia.

The situation in eastern Ukraine has continued to deteriorate. Armed groups stormed the Prosecutor's office in Donetsk yesterday, further increasing the number of Government buildings occupied since the 17 April Geneva agreement. We remain seriously concerned about the kidnapping and continued detention of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe's Vienna Document inspectors, and call on Russia to condemn this criminal act and use its influence over those who are holding the inspectors to bring about their immediate, safe and unconditional release. We are deeply disturbed by the reports of abductions and intimidation of journalists reporting from eastern Ukraine. The Council discussed the protection of journalists in an open debate last year (see S/PV.7003). One of its clearest conclusions was on the central importance of safeguarding a free media so that facts and truth can be told. Instead, what we are seeing in Ukraine is a torrent of disinformation and propaganda.

Three days ago, all the members of the Council emphasized the importance of the 17 April agreement and its implementation (see S/PV.7165). Abiding by that agreement remains the best way to de-escalate the volatile and dangerous situation in eastern Ukraine. It is therefore regrettable that Russia's presidential

press secretary said this morning that Russia did not think it any longer possible to implement the 17 April agreement. Worsening instability in Ukraine is in no one's long-term interest. We urge Russia to step back from such rhetoric, to desist from its inflammatory propaganda and to commit to de-escalating a perilous situation. We urge Russia to throw its full weight behind the 17 April agreement and rein in the militant armed groups that it supports and that are responsible for the current crisis.

Ms. Power (United States of America): In recent months, the Council has met more than a dozen times regarding the situation in Ukraine. Time and again, we have urged for respect for Ukraine's territorial integrity, adherence to international law, and steps to reduce tensions and de-escalate the crisis. Just this Tuesday, we met to discuss Russia's inexcusable failure to fulfil its obligations under the 17 April Geneva agreement (see S/PV.7165).

Russia is pushing two monumental falsehoods right now. The first falsehood is that the Ukrainians are carrying out a large-scale, uncontrolled, violent attack on unarmed civilians. That is false. The Ukrainian Government is carrying out a targeted effort to contain Russian-sponsored paramilitary violence emanating from Sloviansk, in an effort to deliver security for Ukrainian citizens. There is horrible violence in eastern Ukraine, and that violence is coming, as it has been for weeks now, from Russian-directed agents and paramilitaries and their associates. The second monumental falsehood is that the Russian Federation is deeply concerned about the instability in the east. The rest of us are deeply and sincerely concerned by that instability. But despite all its rhetoric, Russia cannot be, because Russia is causing the instability. This expressed concern is cynical and disingenuous, and meant only to distract us from the reality that is playing out before our eyes.

Today I want to focus on one main point. From the outset, the Government of Ukraine has sought to resolve all issues peacefully through dialogue, both internally and with the Russian Federation. This policy of restraint continued even after Russia subverted Crimea, orchestrated an undemocratic separatist vote in Crimea, invaded Crimea and announced to the world that it had annexed Crimea — while lying about its intentions and even its presence in Crimea every step of the way. As its country has been carved up, as foreign operatives have moved into its homeland, as masses of Russian troops have assembled along its eastern border, and as Moscow has continued to threaten its territorial integrity and its people, Ukraine has continuously, day after day, shown remarkable, almost unimaginable, restraint. It has done as the Council has asked. It has implemented its international agreements. It has refrained from military responses to aggression, even as Russia proudly announced that it had annexed part of Ukraine. Ukraine has over and over again committed and recommitted itself to direct dialogue with Moscow. And yet, in return for Ukraine's reasonableness, Russia has destabilized, threatened and terrorized.

In past weeks, the same scenario that played itself out in Crimea has been repeating itself in parts of eastern Ukraine: the same sudden appearance of unfamiliar men and new armaments; the same strategy of occupying buildings and taking control of the media; the same vicious propaganda directed against the Government of Ukraine and the same denials of Russian involvement; and the same cries of outrage whenever Ukraine takes a step to assert its own rights, enforce its own laws, protect its own citizens and restore order on its own territory.

The Ukrainian people and Government have embarked on an effort today to reclaim one city in the eastern part of their country. Their response is reasonable, it is proportional and, frankly, it is what any one of our countries would have done in the face of that threat.

Imagine for a moment if 26,000 square kilometres of Russian territory were seized by another country. Would Moscow show restraint, week after week, day after day, in the hopes that rational dialogue rather than brute force would prevail? How would President Putin respond, if parts of his country were seized, to requests to remove his army from those parts of the country? Seriously, there is some irony in Russian demands, given the manner in which it would deal with separatism within its borders.

It has been 63 days since Russia began its campaign to annex Crimea, and for 63 days, day after day, the Ukrainian Government has chosen peace. Yet in those same 63 days, Russia, day after day, has chosen to pursue more territory.

Consider the following facts. Pro-Russian separatists have seized the Donetsk railway control centre and stopped almost all train movements. That is an illegal act. Separatists seized control of the Donetsk

General Prosecutor's office, in a violent clash that left more than two dozen people hospitalized. That is an illegal act. Separatists seized the General Prosecutor's office in Horlivka. That is an illegal act. Pro-Russian activists beat up two Radio Svoboda journalists who were filming a protest near the Kharkiv regional administration building on 1 May. That is an illegal act. We could go on and on and on and on about the illegal acts.

All told, in 17 towns in eastern Ukraine 32 buildings are under occupation, 21 by armed personnel. In addition, we have seen dozens of Ukrainian public officials illegally detained, three bodies pulled from a river near Donetsk and a group of eight, now seven, monitors of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) abducted, in direct defiance not simply of Ukraine's Government but of the Council and the world community.

Alongside all of that action, we have heard the Russian Federation building its case for intervention — outright intervention — including President Putin saying that eastern Ukrainian cities and Odessa were not even part of Ukraine in the "good old days", harkening back to the glory of Novorossiysk. And Ambassador Churkin has taken the United Nations Charter's name in vein by invoking Article 51 in self-defence, as activated during the Russian takeover of parts of Georgia and relevant here in the context of the crisis in eastern Ukraine. The country that has a right of self-defence, Ambassador Churkin, is Ukraine.

Russia's military intervention in Ukraine is a clear violation of international law, and Russia fools no one by calling its troops "peacekeepers". Unfortunately, Russia does have a track record of using the term "peacekeeping" as cover for unlawful military intervention and occupation without authorization from the Security Council. There is no evidence that the Ukrainian Government has targeted Russian nationals or threatened Russia in any way, in stark contrast to the ongoing Russian actions to destabilize eastern Ukraine. If Russia thinks peacekeeping forces are required in Ukraine, it should come to the Security Council and seek United Nations peacekeepers.

Those separatists are not engaged in peaceful protest on behalf of their rights. Their rights are not being threatened. Their ability to use their language and have it recognized by the Government is not being threatened. Their ability to participate fully as voters and citizens is not being threatened. It is their methods that have been intentionally provocative and threatening. The separatists are not pressing their case peacefully. They are using baseball bats, metal bars, clubs and knives. Those are not activists, they are armed operatives. It must stop.

Since the beginning of the crisis, the Ukrainian Government has acted in good faith and with admirable restraint. The area around Kyiv City Hall is now clear of all Maidan barricades and protesters. Over the Easter holiday, Ukraine voluntarily suspended its counter-terrorism initiative, choosing to de-escalate, despite its fundamental right to provide security on its own territory and for its own people. Even today, as a it tries to lawfully restore order, Ukrainian security forces are operating in a cautious and restrained manner. Unlike the separatists, Ukraine has cooperated fully with the OSCE special monitoring mission and allowed its observers to operate in regions about which Moscow had voiced concerns regarding the treatment of ethnic Russians. In addition, Prime Minister Yatsenyuk has publicly committed his Government to undertake far-reaching constitutional reforms that will strengthen the power of the regions. He has appealed personally to Russian-speaking Ukrainians, pledging to support a special status for the Russian language and to protect those who use it. He announced legislation to grant amnesty to those who surrendered arms.

The fact that Ukraine has now taken some steps to try to restore order is to be expected. It is justified. It is what each and every one of the States we represent would do in a similar situation, and would probably have done far earlier. The fact that Russia has chosen to call an emergency meeting in protest is yet another indication that the authorities in Moscow either underestimate the intelligence of the world community or that they are trying to exactly replicate in eastern Ukraine the charade that they were responsible for in Crimea. We are outraged by that prospect, but we are not fooled.

Just as Russia and its pro-Russian militia allies engage in a dramatic and dangerous campaign in eastern Ukraine, the Russian Government is spreading some of its most wild propaganda and fantasy stories since the beginning of the crisis. Over the course of the aggression, some of those entrusted with carrying out the functions of the municipal Government and those reporting impartially on the facts have begun to slowly disappear. Local council members, local police

and journalists are missing and being held by armed operatives. International observers from the Vienna Document observation team, as the Council knows, are being held in hostage. Those who have an interest and a mandate to report on the truth are being silenced, and that silence is being filled with relentless Russian propaganda and fiction that, it seems, they hope will justify whatever actions they decide to take.

Today's Russian Foreign Ministry ridiculous and false statement purporting Western intervention would not be so alarming if it did not suggest that Moscow is looking for nothing short of a pretext to invade. Russia may have the power to instigate fear, to spread lies and to sow discord, violence and disarray across its border. It may even have the power to abuse its veto at the Security Council. But, as we have said in the Chamber before, it cannot veto the truth.

These are dangerous days for Ukraine and for all of us. If there is hope to de-escalate, Russia must pull back its troops from the eastern border of Ukraine, it must cease its campaign of instability inside of Ukraine, and it must work to release the international observers and journalists who have been taken by armed men working on behalf of Moscow's agenda.

Over the past 63 days, in the face of aggression and annexation, the Council implored the Ukrainians to demonstrate restraint, and they heeded our call. We also asked Russia to stop invading its neighbour. Sadly, it did not. For that, Russia must be held accountable.

In conclusion, I reiterate the support of my Government for the principles of the United Nations Charter. We continue to support the scheduled 25 May elections, which will enable the people of Ukraine to choose their leaders freely and fairly. We continue to seek a peaceful, democratic, inclusive and united Ukraine. We remain committed to a diplomatic process.

Finally and most urgently, we call on Russia to cease its provocative acts and to fulfil the Geneva commitments from which it has walked away.

Ms. Lucas (Luxembourg) (*spoke in French*): I thank the Under-Secretary-General for Political Affairs, Mr. Jeffrey Feltman, for his briefing.

The situation in eastern Ukraine is deteriorating in a worrying manner. Everything must be done so that it does not degenerate into an open conflict with incalculable consequences for international peace and security.

We are deeply concerned by the actions of pro-Russian militias separatists supported by Russia, who are clearly trying to destabilize the east of Ukraine and to prevent the holding of presidential elections on 25 May.

Faced with violations of its sovereignty and territorial integrity for two months now, the Ukrainian authorities have demonstrated restraint. They did not respond militarily to the occupation or annexation of Crimea by the Russian Federation. Until now, the Ukrainian authorities have shown the greatest of restraint in responding to the proliferation of cases of illegal occupation of public buildings by armed militias, the growing number of attacks against Ukrainian security forces and the surge in violence against those demonstrating peacefully in favour of the unity of Ukraine in the east of the country.

We deeply regret that the confrontations today near Sloviansk and during the demonstrations in Odessa have led to deaths and scores of injured, according to media reports. We reiterate our call for the de-escalation of tensions and for restraint on all sides, fully in keeping with the joint statement adopted on 17 April in Geneva by the chief diplomats of Ukraine, Russia, the United States and the European Union. This is no time to tear up that agreement, but to uphold it. The loss of human life over the past few hours could have been avoided if all parties involved had done the necessary to implement the Geneva statement.

As we meet here, the situation on the ground is chaotic. The presence throughout the territory of Ukraine of impartial observers from the United Nations and the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) is crucial for establishing the facts and defusing the war-mongering propaganda. Neutral monitoring and reporting of the facts will help create the conditions to de-escalate this dangerous situation. The OSCE special monitoring mission must be able to fully carry out its work to support the de-escalation measures set out in the Geneva statement.

The safety of the international observers deployed across Ukraine must be guaranteed by all of the parties. We take this opportunity to reiterate our strong condemnation of the kidnapping of a team of military inspectors deployed under the OSCE 2011 Vienna Document. We reiterate our call on Russia to continue using all of its influence on the pro-Russian separatists to free, unconditionally and without delay, the seven

monitors from OSCE participating States, whom they have been detaining in Sloviansk for one week now, as well as the Ukrainian personnel accompanying them.

Luxembourg continues to believe that a peaceful way out of this crisis can be found. Nothing can replace direct substantive dialogue between Kyiv and Moscow to find a diplomatic solution to the Ukrainian crisis. For that dialogue to take place, we must urgently proceed to the de-escalation of tensions. We hope that Mr. Feltman's upcoming visit to Moscow and Kyiv will contribute to that. The good offices of the United Nations are needed now more than ever.

Mrs. Perceval (Argentina) (*spoke in Spanish*): I join other speakers in expressing my confidence, on behalf of the delegation of Argentina, in Korea's leadership during the month of its presidency. I also express my recognition and gratitude to the Nigerian presidency of last month.I also thank the Under-Secretary-General for Political Affairs, Mr. Feltman, for his briefing on the situation in Ukraine.

We are meeting for the second time this week to discuss once again the alarming situation in Ukraine, showing that the Security Council has a responsibility to express — and for Argentina, to reiterate — its concern that wide-scale violent confrontations could result from the growing tensions. The alarming reports coming from Solviansk suggest that such confrontations have occurred and that there is a serious risk of entering into a spiral of violence with grave consequences for Ukraine, the region and the international community.

Argentina condemns the acts of violence reported in eastern Ukraine that have claimed human lives. Unfortunately, the calls by the members of the Council, the Secretary-General and the international community on all parties to seek to calm the situation, exhibit the greatest of self-control and to contribute to constructive dialogue have not been heeded. The spirit compromise shown in Geneva has deteriorated rapidly and must be recovered in order to find a political and diplomatic solution to the crisis.

It must be made clear to all parties that a peaceful solution to the difficult situation in Ukraine cannot be achieved through unilateral acts of any sort. It is particularly crucial that all parties fully respect human rights law and international humanitarian law, respect the rights of all minorities and ensure that all actions are strictly within international law.

The only solution that Argentina, like the rest of the international community, considers desirable and necessary is that reached through an inclusive national dialogue with the participation of all of the parties involved. However, to launch such a dialogue process and move towards a solution, it is crucial to create conditions conducive to negotiation, build confidence among the various communities and provide assurances to all Ukrainians throughout Ukraine that their main concerns will be addressed, with full respect for Ukraine's right to see to its internal affairs.

We have witnessed further confrontational rhetoric once again, speeches fomenting hate, discrimination, hostility and violence, and actions that serve only to escalate the already highly volatile situation. All of this seriously undermines any effort by the international community to encourage the parties to enter into constructive dialogue towards a peaceful politico-diplomatic solution to the crisis.

It is therefore crucial that the most influential actors engage in constructive diplomacy, refrain from confrontational rhetoric and use their influence on the parties for progress in the effective implementation of the measures agreed on 17 April in Geneva. Those measures are necessary, indeed indispensable, for de-escalating tensions and finding a way out of the crisis.

Finally, human lives are at stake and regional stability is at risk. Respect for the founding principles of the Charter of the United Nations must be ensured, including the universal principles of the territorial integrity, sovereignty and political independence of Ukraine. The Security Council has met several times in a short period to address this situation, but we have not manifested the capacity to play a constructive role to find a way out of the crisis. Members' calls to de-escalate tensions, exercise restraint and pursue dialogue have no effect because they are not coherent. We have not been able to send out a message in a single voice or to take any sort of action. But it is not too late. The worst can still be averted. Perhaps the Council will — it should — be able to send the same message today as the one the Secretary-General made today, in the same terms, in the same spirit and with the same convictions, that is, that we must assume our responsibility to maintain international peace and security.

Mr. Quinlan (Australia): When we met on 29 April on the situation in Ukraine (see S/PV.7165), we urged Russia to abide by the commitments it made in Geneva on 17 April, including to refrain from violence, intimidation and provocative actions. Since then, as Under-Secretary-General Feltman has just told us, the situation has further deteriorated severely. This planned and coordinated destabilization could not happen without external support. The shooting down of Ukrainian helicopters in Sloviansk today by surface-to-air missiles is dramatic further evidence of that. We are witnessing well-armed, well-trained personnel, using military weapons, who are intent on armed provocation. We have seen further takeover and consolidation of control by armed militia groups over key facilities in cities and towns right across eastern Ukraine, including Donetsk, Kharkiv, Mariupol, Sloviansk and Holivka. Orchestrated violence has today spread to Odessa.

Journalists in eastern Ukraine have been detained. There are kidnappings and torture. The Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe observers, detained on 25 April, are still being held hostage a week later. That is an affront to the entire international community, and they must be released immediately.

Those actions by pro-Russian groups are clearly not a legitimate protest or an attempt to protect Russian speakers from alleged or spurious threats. They are calculated, cynical and highly provocative actions, obviously designed to undermine Ukrainian State authority, to intimidate and de-stabilize. They make a mockery of what Russia has committed to in the Geneva agreement.

Ukraine itself is working to implement its Geneva commitments. It has submitted to Parliament a draft law and amnesty for protesters who surrender their weapons. It has initiated a process of constitutional reform aimed at decentralizing power. It has committed to holding a broad public debate on possible constitutional change. However, in response to the extreme provocation that Ukraine is facing, Ukrainian authorities have the right and responsibility to seek to reinstate State authority and restore public order over all their territory.

Ukrainian authorities have given clear messages to militant groups as to what is required of them, as Interior Minister Avakov has said: "Free the hostages. Lay down weapons. Vacate administrative buildings, and get municipal infrastructure back to normal". That has not happened. In these circumstances, it is appropriate and necessary for the Ukrainian Government to take measures to try to ensure security and protect its own citizens in its own territory.

We have seen a statement from Russia's Foreign Ministry earlier today describing — hypocritically, shamelessly — the policy of those who have supported Ukraine as "destructive". But what is destructive is Russia's reckless interference in its neighbour's affairs — destructive of Ukraine's stability and territorial integrity, destructive of the Geneva agreement, destructive of regional security, destructive of the Charter of the United Nations and the laws governing relations between countries and destructive of Russia's own standing and credibility.

We are at a very dangerous, manipulated moment, and Russia must immediately de-escalate the situation, ensure that militia groups desist in their armed rebellion, implement the Geneva agreement and demonstrate, as President Putin has claimed, that it has no further territorial ambitions on Ukraine. That certainly does not appear to be the case.

Mr. Liu Jieyi (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): I wish to congratulate the Republic of Korea on its assumption of the presidency of the Security Council for this month and to express appreciation to the Ambassador of Nigeria and her team for their outstanding leadership of the work of the Council last month. I also wish to thank Under-Secretary-General for Political Affairs Feltman for his briefing.

In recent days, the situation in some areas in south-eastern Ukraine has been characterized by ongoing tensions and escalation that have resulted in casualties. That is a matter of deep concern to China. China has indicated on many occasions its principled position on the question of Ukraine. We hope that the parties concerned will proceed from the need to safeguard the fundamental interests of various ethnic groups in Ukraine, maintain regional peace and stability, keep calm, exercise restraint and avoid further deterioration of the situation.

A political solution is the only way out of the crisis in Ukraine. A fundamental settlement to the crisis in Ukraine needs to take into consideration the history and the reality, and accommodate the legitimate rights, interests and aspirations of various regions and ethnic groups within Ukraine, as well as the legitimate concerns of all parties, so as to achieve a balance of their interests.

For some time, various parties, including China, have worked actively to promote peace and facilitate negotiations. The four-party talks in Geneva among the Russian Federation, the United States, the European Union and Ukraine agreed on the need to take measures to de-escalate the situation in Ukraine. We hope that the parties concerned will stick to dialogue and consultations, effectively implement the agreements reached, forcefully promote the process of political settlement and achieve stability and development in Ukraine as soon as possible.

China calls on all parties to seek a political settlement to the question of Ukraine through dialogue, not confrontation. We will continue to support international good offices that will help to de-escalate the situation and promote a political settlement.

Mr. Cherif (Chad) (*spoke in French*): I would like to congratulate you, Madam President, on your accession to the presidency of the Council, and I wish you and your entire team every success in your endeavours. I would also like to pay tribute to Mrs. Joy Ogwu and her team for Nigeria's excellent stewardship of the Council last month. I would also like to thank Mr. Feltman for his briefing.

Despite repeated calls for restraint and for calm, Chad notes with great concern that the situation in eastern Ukraine continues to deteriorate politically and in terms of security and runs the risk of degenerating into a war with incalculable consequences. A number of missions, attempts at arbitration, mediation and other efforts have been undertaken to contribute to de-escalating the situation and to opening the way to dialogue. The results, however, have fallen far short of expectations.

Chad condemns the most recent acts of violence in eastern Ukraine, which have led to a number of deaths and significant material damage. Given the grave situation, Chad reiterates its call for an immediate halt to the fighting and for adherence to non-violence, both by Government forces and the separatists. We also launch an appeal for the release of the seven observers from the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe still being held in detention. We remain convinced that a solution to the Ukrainian problem is necessarily a political. It must be sought in full respect for the territorial integrity, sovereignty and unity of Ukraine and in keeping with the Charter of the United Nations.

Chad also reiterates its call for calm, restraint and a de-escalation of the situation. We call on the countries with influence on the parties to use all means possible to establish direct dialogue between the parties. With that in mind, we encourage the international community, especially the Secretary-General, to redouble efforts to bring about a rapprochement between the parties in order to find a peaceful solution to the Ukrainian crisis.

Ms. Murmokaitė (Lithuania): Let me start by congratulating the Korean delegation on its assumption of the presidency of the Security Council for the month of May. I wish you every success during your tenure, Madam. I would also like to express my delegation's appreciation and gratitude to the outgoing presidency of Nigeria for its wise stewardship of the Council during the month of April. I would also like to thank Mr. Jeffrey Feltman for his brief but troubling information.

I would like to return to a question that has been already raised: What would a country do if a group of people in one of its towns decided to break away and declare themselves above the country's laws and Constitution, arm themselves illegally and attack local Government, administrative and justice buildings and take hostages and practice enforced disappearances, beatings and killings? If such groups were supported by sponsors from abroad and propped up by massive propaganda campaigns demonizing the people and the Government, and if provocations were expanding into other regions of one's country, would one sit and wait for the country to be decimated, or would one act in the country's interest, protecting its sovereignty, unity and territorial integrity?

Ukraine has taken belated and highly cautious actions against those who are determined to carve it up and parcel it out. Like any other State represented in this Chamber, it has the right to protect its unity, sovereignty and territorial integrity by all means necessary.

As far as punitive actions go, let us be frank. There were more victims on Thursday in Aleppo after a market bombing by barrel bombs: at least 33 people were killed and many more were wounded. That took place a day after a barrel bomb was dropped by a Government aircraft on an elementary school in another part of the city, killing at least 20 other people, including 17 children. Russia has so far not condemned that punitive act by the Al-Assad regime, like countless

similar acts by the regime in the course of more then three years of ongoing war in that country.

Today in eastern Ukraine, two Ukrainian helicopters were shot down by mobile air defence systems, killing two military officers and injuring seven others. Another army helicopter was also damaged. Militants used grenade launchers and portable air defence systems. Peaceful protesters do not use grenade launchers that can shoot down helicopters, or perhaps planes at some time in the future. Peaceful protesters do not take their morning walks armed with heavy weapons and automatic weapons. They do not kidnap and shamelessly parade international observers. Today provocations and instigations are being carried out in yet another city in Ukraine, as our Australian colleague has mentioned, and there have now been deaths in Odessa.

Had the separatists respected and carried out the Geneva statement, had they not taken up arms against their own State in the first place, none of that would be happening. It would not be happening had Russia, the only Power with real influence on the separatists, denounced such acts of aggression and called on the separatists to accept a peaceful path of talks with the central Government. Instead, Russia chose to continue to put the blame on Ukraine, the only side that is actually taking some steps — at gunpoint — to implement the Geneva statement.

In addition to the various initiatives that were referred to a couple of days ago during the Council's open briefing (see S/PV.7165) — an amnesty law, a limitation of presidential powers, decentralization — Ukraine's Prime Minister, Arseniy Yatsenyuk, has now announced that the Government will submit a draft law to the Parliament on a referendum on national unity, territorial integrity and decentralization, to be held on 25 May together with the presidential elections. He again stressed that decentralization would grant, in certain territories, additional guarantees to the Russian-speaking population, as well as to members of ethnic minorities.

But I guess that people in eastern and southern Ukraine do not really know that such initiatives even exist, because an aggressive propaganda machine has drowned out the voice of Kyiv, with its alternative narrative of Ukraine's demonization. They simply will not be allowed to know that viable alternatives exist to the path of war, because that is not in the plans of those who cannot wait to disrupt the 25 May elections and proceed with Ukraine's dismemberment, under false referendums, the so-called "will of the people" or any sham pretext still in use by pro-Russian militants and their State sponsors. And we must very carefully watch on 11 May, when the self-proclaimed so-called "people's mayor" of Donetsk republic is demanding a new referendum be held. I would not be surprised if another request to join Russia follows after that referendum.

My Government condemns all attempts to destroy Ukraine's independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity, and firmly rejects all Russian attempts to validate its intentions and threats to use armed forces or to send Russian Federation peacekeepers into Ukraine's territory.

A couple of days ago, we expressed support for the Secretary-General's initiatives and called for stepping up international mediation efforts. We now welcome the fact that Under-Secretary-General Feltman will be going to the region. We fully stand behind the efforts to de-escalate the situation. We also think, as the representative of Luxembourg has stated, that the international observers who are there to provide unbiased, objective information must be allowed to work across all of Ukraine's territory, in order to help us all better understand what is happening there, but also to help in de-escalating the situation before it becomes much worse.

The international community must mobilize to prevent the crisis from turning into a real bloodbath. For we have seen, time and again, how deadly, horrifying and inhuman the results of incitement and demonizing the other can be. We have seen it in South Sudan, in the Central African Republic and elsewhere. In a tragic twist of irony, in the middle of Europe two sisterly nations, two Slavic Orthodox nations, may start killing each other, both victims of ruthless manipulation through propaganda, orchestrated by the Kremlin. The Geneva statement is the only thing we have on the table now. We should go back to it. We hae to let it work. It is in the interests of all of us.

Mrs. Ogwu (Nigeria): I want to thank you, Madam President, for accepting to shepherd the Security Council in the month of May. My delegation wishes you green pastures.

I thank Under-Secretary-General Feltman for his update.

The delicate nature of the situation in Ukraine impels us to urge great circumspection by the contending parties in order to avoid a degeneration of the crisis into full-blown military confrontation. That consideration is even more pertinent today, as developments on the ground have assumed an anarchical dimension. The reported downing of two Ukrainian military helicopters yesterday and the seizure of a local railway control centre near Donetsk by unidentified armed groups amplify our concerns. The brazen takeover and control of public establishments by armed groups has led to the recent response by the Government of Ukraine. We acknowledge the responsibility of the Government to maintain public order and the rule of law. It is also possible to restore public order in a measured manner to avoid degeneration into a full-blown conflict.

Our call on all parties to de-escalate tensions could not be more urgent. We reiterate our position that the outcome of the Geneva meeting of 17 April among Ukraine, the Russian Federation, the European Union and the United States provides the path to the resolution of the conflict. There are, however, prerequisites to that. All sides must refrain from violence, intimidation or provocative action. All armed groups must disarm and vacate illegally seized buildings.

The doors to a diplomatic solution must remain open. The international community, including the United Nations and the relevant regional organizations, must remain engaged and committed to finding a peaceful solution that takes into consideration the interests of all people of Ukraine. We would like to see Ukraine return to peace, security and stability, and its independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity respected in accordance with the Charter of United Nations.

The alternative would resemble falling dominoes — not only in the region but in every other region in the world. Perhaps we should all study the domino theory. We would be mortified by what we saw. The current scenario is for us simply mortifying. It is our collective responsibility to prevent the domino theory from being replayed out in our times.

Mr. Hmoud (Jordan) (*spoke in Arabic*): We would also like to congratulate the Republic of Korea on its assumption of the presidency of the Security Council for this month. We thank the delegation of Nigeria for all its work as President of the Council last month. And we thank the Under-Secretary-General for Political Affairs, Mr. Jeffrey Feltman, for his briefing.

Jordan would like to express its deep concern about the most recent developments in Sloviansk in the east of Ukraine, in addition to the spillover violence in other regions of the country, including in Odessa. We call upon all parties to demonstrate restraint. We call for a return to calm and for de-escalation and full cooperation with the monitors affiliated with the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE). We reiterate our appeal for the release of all hostages held by rebels in Sloviansk, including the OSCE monitors.

What is happening today in the east of Ukraine is not civil war, but rather a mutiny. The actions of the rebels, including the ongoing occupation of seized Government buildings, the use of force, the intimidation of civilians and threats to their life and security, are in violation of the law. As Mr. Feltman said, the continuation of those actions runs counter to the letter and spirit of the Geneva agreement signed in April. We reaffirm Ukraine's right to take appropriate and effective measures to halt violations in the eastern part of the country, preserve its unity and sovereignty, safeguard the security of its citizens and uphold constitutional and legal order.

At the same time, we call upon the Ukrainian Government to work towards a peaceful solution to the crisis and respect international norms in dealing with the situation. It is important to uphold the relevant human rights principles and to spare no effort in immediately engaging in dialogue with stakeholders to reach a peaceful solution. We must not lose the opportunity brought about by the Geneva agreement, which is a guarantee for calm in the east of the country and for preserving the territorial unity of Ukraine. We appeal to the stakeholders to implement the agreement and bring pressure to bear on the rebels to end the crisis.

Rebels and all active stakeholders in Ukraine should refrain from racist or hate speech. There is a need to guarantee a return to stability in the country. We call upon all players to help the Ukrainian authorities in their efforts to guarantee success on the political transition process and to start a comprehensive and direct dialogue with all linguistic groups.

Finally, we underscore the importance of respecting the legitimate aspirations of the Ukrainian people and of working tirelessly to ensure that presidential elections

are held within the set time frame in May, in line with those aspirations and while ensuring the future that Ukrainian citizens deserve, within the framework of a comprehensive, effective and lasting political process.

Mr. Barros (Chile) (*spoke in Spanish*): We would like to congratulate the delegation of the Republic of Korea on its assumption of the presidency of the Security Council. We would like to reiterate our commitment to providing ongoing support towards the success of its stewardship. We also thank the delegation of Nigeria for its excellent work in the presidency during the month of April.

We value the briefing by Under-Secretary-General Feltman.

Since the Council last met to discuss the situation in Ukraine (see S/PV.7165), just three days ago, the crisis has escalated and, once again, we see acts of violence involving separatist groups. The crisis is very quickly entering a dangerous and unpredictable phase. We regret that turn of events and we would like to express our deep concern at the recent events in Sloviansk that had fatal consequences.

The Council must contribute to generating maximum restraint and moderation from the parties. We reiterate our call upon all parties to use all means conducive to finding a peaceful settlement of the crisis through inclusive political dialogue. It is also extremely important that parties focus on a peaceful way out of the crisis through direct political dialogue, that they refrain from acting unilaterally and that they support international mediation efforts, in keeping with General Assembly resolution 68/262. In that context, we reiterate our condemnation of the kidnapping of observers affiliated with the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe and we reiterate our call for them to be released immediately and without conditions.

Now more than ever, it is vital to work in a spirit of compromise like that which we saw during the Geneva talks on 17 April, which then led to the joint declaration of the Ministers for Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation, the United States of America, Ukraine and the European Union. That agreement lays out specific steps for reducing tensions and restoring security for all citizens, such as, inter alia, refraining from the use of violence or intimidation, the disarmament of armed groups and the handover of illegally occupied buildings. Once again, we reiterate the need for respecting the sovereignty, independence and territorial integrity of Ukraine. Similarly, we reaffirm the responsibility incumbent on States Members of the United Nations to show restraint in the use of force or the threat thereof against the territorial integrity or political independence of any State.

Chile believes that it is necessary to strengthen the possibilities for a diplomatic solution to be found. To that end, we support the efforts of the Secretary-General and, in particular, we welcome the visit of Under-Secretary-General Feltman to Ukraine and Russia, which at this time Chile believes is the top priority. Chile also believes any further escalation of the crisis should be avoided by entering into dialogue and through confidence-building measures, with a view to contributing to the establishment of an environment conducive to the holding of presidential elections on 25 May.

Mr. Gasana (Rwanda): I also thank Mr. Jeffrey Feltman, Under-Secretary-General for Political Affairs, for his briefing.

The situation in Ukraine has further deteriorated in the past few hours. Ukrainian forces have launched operations against the separatist militants in the eastern part of the city of Sloviansk. The rebels have continued to seize public building in cities in eastern Ukraine, mainly in Sloviansk and Donetsk, where the Prosecutor's office is even occupied by the militants. They even shot down two Ukrainian helicopters on Friday, killing two crew members. In the meantime, the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) military observers are still being illegally detained by separatist militants. We are of course deeply concerned by all those developments, which further deteriorate the already delicate situation in eastern Ukraine. We strongly condemn the violent methods used by armed separatists and we call for a proportionate response by the Ukrainian forces.

However, we should put our full support behind the good offices of the Secretary-General in resolving the crisis in Ukraine. We are happy to hear that Mr. Jeffrey Feltman is going to Ukraine and Moscow. I call upon all Council members to trust him, to trust his envoys and to give them the means and the political backing necessary to conduct a meaningful mediation in Ukraine and the region.

The strongest condemnation of Rwanda or of any other Council member on the deterioration of the crisis will not solve the Ukrainian conflict. We all know that

only a genuine dialogue by the Ukrainian parties, on the basis of the 17 April Geneva outcome, and a strong commitment on the part of of those who have influence on them, who need to ensure that the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Ukraine are preserved, can solve this crisis. Otherwise, the situation will further escalate, the conflict will become regional, or worse, and it would be useless to continue to convene emergency public briefings of the Security Council if the concerned parties and countries are not willing to be responsible and solve the conflict. In that regard, we need to scale down the rhetoric.

The President: I shall now make a statement in my capacity as the representative of the Republic of Korea.

I thank the Under-Secretary-General for Political Affairs, Mr. Jeffrey Feltman, for his briefing.

The Republic of Korea is deeply concerned about the continuing tensions in eastern Ukraine. Despite the agreement reached in Geneva on 17 April, the situation in Ukraine is showing no signs of abating. We are particularly alarmed by the fresh violence that erupted in Sloviansk over night, including violent attacks targeting two Government helicopters by illegal armed groups. We strongly condemn those attacks, which resulted in the death of two Ukrainians. Such instances point to a serious deterioration in the situation. All provocative actions and hostile rhetoric aimed at destabilizing Ukraine must cease immediately.

In the light of the ongoing situation in Ukraine, we reiterate that constructive dialogue among all concerned parties will be the only way to achieve a peaceful solution. In that regard, we call for all parties to the Geneva statement to implement their commitments. We also fully support the Secretary-General's good offices and diplomatic initiatives. We hope that Under-Secretary-General Feltman's upcoming visit to Ukraine and Russia will contribute to a de-escalating of tensions on the ground.

With the important elections scheduled in May, it is still all the more important to ensure the environment is conducive to fair and free elections in the country without any intervention or influence by outside forces. We hope that the Ukrainian Government will lead a inclusive and transparent constitutional process.

We once again reaffirm our full support for Ukraine's sovereignty, independence and territorial integrity.

I resume now my functions as President of the Council.

I give the floor to the representative of Ukraine.

Mr. Pavlichenko (Ukraine): Let me start by congratulating you, Mr. President, on your assumption of the presidency of the Security Council for the month of May. We wish you every success in fulfilling that duty. We also want to thank the Nigerian delegation for its successful presidency last month. I would also like to extend our thanks to the Security Council delegations for their support of, and solidarity with, the Government and the people of Ukraine. I also thank Mr. Feltman for his briefing today.

Ukraine remains committed to the implementation of the agreements reached at the meeting of the Foreign Ministers of Ukraine, the Russian Federation, the European Union and the United States in Geneva on 17 April. Free and fair presidential elections on 25 May remain a top priority of the Government of Ukraine.

We reject all attempts by Russia to blame the Government of Ukraine for allegedly failing to implement the agreements. We wouldl ike to say that, despite numerous calls by the international community, the Russian Federation has made no efforts to de-escalate the situation and implement the Geneva agreement. Instead, Russia strongly supports illegal militant groups operating in the eastern region of Ukraine, endangering civilians, seizing hostages and creating an atmosphere of terror and violence.

Security, as well as the protection of the rights and fundamental freedoms of all the people of Ukraine, remains a top priority for the Government of Ukraine. Therefore, the purpose of the counter-terrorist operation, the active phase of which has been renewed in Sloviansk, is to isolate illegal militants from the civilian population of the city. The commander of the counter-terrorist operation has ordered the heavily armed illegal militants to immediately free all hostages, including monitors of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe, to evacuate all seized administrative buildings and to stop the violence and massacres. The Ukrainian authorities are ready to provide amnesty to all those members of militant groups who have not committed serious crimes. Inclusive political dialogue with peaceful protesters remains a top priority for the Ukrainian Government.

We officially state that no tanks or missiles are used against civilians. Russian statements about the

participation of non-governmental armed groups in the counter-terrorist operation are not true. Russian statements as to the involvement of English-speaking foreigners are absolutely cynical and false. We officially state that the only foreign military personnel in eastern Ukraine are Russian saboteurs and mercenaries.

The Ukrainian side, as well as the Russian Embassy in Kyiv, was not duly informed about today's arrival in Ukraine of Vladimir Lukin, the so-called representative of the Russian President whose mission is, as he says, to contribute to the liberation of the hostages taken in eastern Ukraine. Despite the circumstances of Mr. Lukin's arrival, and taking into account the highest priority that the Ukrainian Government attaches to the release of all hostages held by illegal militants, we are ready to discuss with Mr. Lukin, as with other interested mediators, his practical contribution in order to resolve the problem.

I would like to remind the Council that, due to the particularly dangerous situation in Sloviansk, in accordance with our 2003 law on combating terrorism, Ukraine's National Security and Defence Council has taken the decision to launch a large-scale counter-terrorism operation. Owing to increasing threats to the civilian population, this morning the active phase of that counter-terrorism operation was renewed in the area of the cities of Sloviansk and Kramatorsk, where units of the Ministry of Internal Affairs, the National Guard and the Ukrainian Border Service were engaged. The counter-terrorist operation is being implemented exclusively by the law-enforcement agencies of Ukraine.

At the moment, nine terrorist checkpoints have been taken under the control of Ukrainian law-enforcement agencies in Sloviansk. The illegal militants, many of whom are foreign mercenaries, are using heavy firearms against the Ukrainian special forces. They have shot down two Ukrainian helicopters with rocket-propelled grenades, man-portable air defence system guided missiles and anti-aircraft guns. Two officers have been killed and seven wounded. The terrorists do not hesitate to use members of the local peaceful population as human shields. The brutal tactic of firing from residential buildings is used widely in Sloviansk by the terrorists, who are very well aware of the Government instructions to its law-enforcement agents not to answer fire coming from residential buildings.

I would also like to mention that this evening there were also attempts to break through the State border by groups of armed Russian saboteurs, who were stopped by our guards. That is why we call on our Russian partners to immediately stop supporting all the illegal militants on Ukraine's territory and other actions aimed at undermining the sovereignty and territorial integrity of my country.

In conclusion, I would like to cite the statement made today by Mr. Oleksandr Turchynov, Acting President of Ukraine. He said that Ukraine demands that terrorist saboteurs and all those who have taken up arms in our country lay down their weapons and surrender their hostages and occupied administrative buildings. Those who lay down their arms and are not involved in serious crimes will be given amnesty, but those accused of murder and torture will be punished. Ukraine, he said, would secure peace and stability in spite of all the efforts to organize acts provocation and unrest aimed at destabilizing the situation in the east and and south of the country, particularly in Kharkiv and Odessa. He said that he would also like to appeal to the leadership of the Russian Federation to end the hysteria about the events taking place in Ukraine and to cease its threats and intimidation. If it is concerned about violations of citizens' rights, it should protect them in its own country, where human rights are systematically violated. He also called on Russia to end its acts of provocation against Ukraine and to refrain from using terrorism, sabotage and military threats as a form of pressure on it. Despite all the problems and opposition, he said, peace would be ensured in Ukraine and the terrorist threat in eastern Ukraine would be stopped.

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of the Russian Federation, who has asked for the floor to make a further statement.

Mr. Churkin (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): Our encyclopedically educated and eloquent French colleague inserted an interesting quotation in his statement, to the effect that when we sin, it is only the first step that carries a cost, and the subsequent ones are easier. Indeed, we can find affirmations of his words of wisdom in the history of the still young twenty-first century. Among other things, the twenty-first century has presented humankind and international relations with the gift of practices such as enforced regime change, done in an attempt to impose someone's geopolitical vision on other countries of the world. It is very clear that every such attempt launched early in the twenty-first century has resulted in terrible

destabilization. But, having taken that first step, the people who made those attempts have nonetheless been unable to stop and have gone on with them. This time that has led to serious destabilization in Ukraine.

I would like to remind the Council that, during the several months of crises preceding the overthrow of the lawful administration between 21 and 25 February, our Western colleagues never once called for a halt to the violence perpetrated in Kyiv and other regions of Ukraine against the lawful authorities. There were no calls to President Yanukovych to use every possible means at his disposal as lawful President, including that of force, in order to impose order in the country. But now, for some reason, those calls are coming loud and clear.

During this entire crisis, Russia has wanted only one thing, which is to avoid destabilization in Ukraine and settle everything through negotiations. We proposed tripartite talks among Ukraine, the European Union and Russia at the start of the crisis on the political confrontation that focused on whether Ukraine should sign an association agreement with the European Union. For some reason, the European Union, with the support of the United States, rejected our proposal. When the 25 February agreement was reached, we supported it. We still believe that many of the 25 February positions are right, and that they must be kept to if we hope to bring Ukraine out of political crisis. We helped to conclude the 17 April Geneva agreement. It is a simple agreement, but it points to a way out of the crisis in the country. The one thing that is essential is that the agreement be fulfilled.

But the most striking and infuriating thing is that the demands of the people of eastern Ukraine are basically fairly simple. Finding themselves in a situation in which the nation's capital was occupied by an illegitimate authority, to a large degree consisting of hostile nationalist radical elements, the people asked that their rights be guaranteed. They demanded federalization. It was noticeable that for a long period — almost two months after the overthrow of the lawful Government — no one there took up arms for at least a couple of months. They were all waiting for some constructive reaction from Kyiv to their demands for protecting their own interests. Not once did any kind of reasonable reaction or serious initiative emanate from Kyiv. Today some of our colleagues spoke approvingly of the most recent — today or yesterday — pronouncement of Mr. Yatsenyuk, in which he talked about 25 May, for which presidential elections are scheduled, and that there will be some kind of poll on decentralization of the country. A poll. The people have been fighting on the barricades for weeks, and they think they have to conduct a poll in order to figure out people's opinion about what they want.

What bothered me more than anything today was how calmly and approvingly our Western colleagues spoke about the search operations that the Kyiv authorities are now carrying out in eastern Ukraine. They gave the impression that they know what the Kyiv authorities are thinking, what their plans are. Maybe they had a part in drawing up those plans, and that was why they talked about what was going on so calmly. Perhaps that should not be so surprising after all, because, as we know, every visit to Kyiv by senior American officials has resulted in events reaching new levels of confrontation, and a more violent turn of events. In that regard, it is not surprising that the United States, as I said in my statement, did not want the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) to do as it was supposed to under the Vienna Document, that is, to bring about dialogue and organize a round table with representative of different regions and the Kyiv Government. Why did the United States not want the OSCE to do that?

Throughout the crisis, Russia several times has suggested different formats for the organization of such dialogue between the Government and opposition forces and regions. The Government did not want to or could not do it themselves. We suggested a constitutional assembly be convened. They said they were not ready to do so.

When the meeting of 17 April was organized, we suggested that representatives of the regions should be included, and that the four parties — the European Union, the United States and Russia and the acting Minister for Foreign Affairs of Ukraine — could start those talks. But that proposal was rejected. The OSCE was then given the mandate, which it tried to carry out only then to be told it should not. Instead, tanks were brought out to Sloviansk and other cities in the east of the country.

Regarding what one colleague said, that Russia is refusing to implement the 17 April Geneva statement, I would repeat that Russia would never refuse to implement any useful document agreed upon during the crisis, including the 21 February agreement.

Actually listening to my statement today, one would notice that the political components were quotations from the 17 April document. If we are truly intent on finding a political solution to the crisis in spite of the dramatic events of recent days, then perhaps we might ask the President, the Permanent Representative of Korea, to make a statement following this meeting, stating that the Security Council, in keeping with the 17 April Geneva statement, calls for a swift halt to the violence, including, of course, the use of force in eastern Ukraine, and appeals for the swift and comprehensive implementation of the Geneva statement. If other members would be ready to support such action, then we would too.

The President: The representative of the United States has asked for the floor to make a further statement.

Ms. Power (United States of America): I would just like to offer a couple of points in response.

First, for the Russians to blame Ukraine for Ukraine's actions in defence of its own people on its own territory really is starting to remind me of the story of the schoolboy who returned home with his nose bloody and his shirt torn and, asked by his mother how the fight started, he said "it started when the other boy hit me back". We have to be clear about cause and effect here, and many Council members, including me, have already gone through the facts that have brought us to this point.

My second point is to debunk yet another of the lies that have been told in this Ch mber, because it relates to my country, the United States. People in this Chamber have heard many times, including just now, that the United States and other countries never called oon protesters in the Maidan to leave buildings or avoid violence. The implication is that we are holding Russian separatists to a different standard. That is a claim that has been made in almost every meeting we have had. I would just like to correct the record. On 15 January, we condemned the actions of rioters outside a Kyiv court building on 10 January. On 22 January, the aggressive actions of members of the extreme-right group Pravy Sektor were unacceptable, enflaming conditions on the streets and undermining the efforts of peaceful protesters. We condemned the targeted attacks against journalists and unofficial groups such as Titushky. On 24 January, when protesters occupied some regional administration buildings, we reiterated our call for all protesters and Government forces to refrain from violence and the destruction of property. On 27 January, we made clear that we condemned the use of violence to seize Government buildings, such as the takeover of a Ministry of Justice building that took place over the past cople of days and of a public exhibition hall that weekend, and continued to reiterate our call for all protesters and Government forces to refrain from violence and the destruction of property. Those are just a few of the statements that we made, but if we could just take that particular lie of the table, it would be helpful and a little more constructive.

What is more important now is where we go from here. What I would ask my Russian colleague is whether Russia will make public statements and work privately behind the scenes to urge Russian separatists to negotiate peacefully their departure from public buildings. Where does Russia assess that Russian separatists who claim loyalty to the Russian Government and who wear uniforms just like those of Russian soldiers obtained weapons and training capable of shooting down Ukrainian helicopters?

Finally, Russia repeatedly takes aim at the so-called illegitimate Government in Kyiv but refuses to acknowledge ever, in any meeting, that it did not embrace the 21 February agreement when it was negotiated. We have a golden opportunity on 25 May for the people of eastern Ukraine to have their voices heard, for them to choose their own leaders and for us to get to a universally legitimate Government that is respected and chosen by all of the people of Ukraine. Yet Russia will not come out in support of the elections and work with us to ensure that they take place — which would be the best way of ensuring rights, representativeness and greater autonomy for the people of eastern Ukraine.

The President: I would like to ask the representative of the Russian Federation whether his idea regarding a presidential statement in support of the Geneva statement is a formal proposal or just an idea.

Mr. Churkin (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): I did not want to say that a lie cannot only be a distortion of facts, but also a selective interpretation of one's own position. That is what we have just heard from my American colleague. What we have heard from Washington, D.C., and the way it was heard clearly demonstrated to all — including to those in Kyiv, which is most important — that the United States looked favourably on the forceful change of power,

which did not ultimately serve the interests of the Ukrainian people.

Regarding my proposal, I do think it would be good to conclude this meeting with such a statement, not asking every delegation what it is going to declare but rather make a joint statement calling for a swift halt to all violence, including the use of military force in the east of the country, and for seriously taking up the full implementation of the Geneva document.

The President: I will ask our coordinators to consider the proposal made by the representative of the Russian Federation and to work on it.

There are no more names inscribed on the list of speakers. The Security Council has thus concluded the present stage of its consideration of the item on its agenda.

The meeting rose at 1.50 p.m.

United Nations S/PV.7168

Security Council

Sixty-ninth year

Provisional

7168th meeting
Friday, 2 May 2014, 3 p.m.
New York

President:	Mr. Oh Joon	(Republic of Korea)
Members:	Argentina	Mrs. Perceval
	Australia	Mr. Quinlan
	Chad	Mr. Cherif
	Chile	Mr. Barros
	China	Mr. Shen Bo
	France	Mr. Araud
	Jordan	Mr. Hmoud
	Lithuania	Ms. Murmokaitė
	Luxembourg	Ms. Lucas
	Nigeria	Mr. Laro
	Russian Federation	Mr. Pankin
	Rwanda	Mr. Gasana
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Sir Mark Lyall Grant
	United States of America	Ms. Power

Agenda

Reports of the Secretary-General on the Sudan and South Sudan

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14-31996 (E)

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The meeting was called to order at 3.05 p.m.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted

Reports of the Secretary-General on the Sudan and South Sudan

The President: In accordance with rule 37 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite the representative of South Sudan to participate in this meeting.

In accordance with rule 39 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite Ms. Navanethem Pillay, United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, and Mr. Adama Dieng, Special Adviser to the Secretary-General on the Prevention of Genocide, to participate in this meeting.

The Security Council will now begin its consideration of the item on its agenda.

I now give the floor to Ms. Pillay.

Ms. Pillay: I thank you, Mr. President, for this opportunity to address the Council on the crisis in South Sudan. My visit to the country this week, together with the Special Adviser to the Secretary-General on the Prevention of Genocide, Mr. Adama Dieng, revealed a sharp and drastic deterioration in the human rights situation. The deadly spiral of revenge killings that has developed over the past four and a half months appears to be reaching a level of intensity that is generating a real fear of disaster among the people of South Sudan and that is compounded by the likelihood of widespread famine that the conflict has generated.

Two weeks ago, in the aftermath of the capture of Bentiu by the Sudan People's Liberation Movement/Army in Opposition, hundreds of people, many of them civilians — including those sheltering in places of worship and hospitals — were hunted down on the basis of their ethnicity and killed. Following the massacre at Bentiu, a retaliatory assault occurred in Bor against displaced people who had sought refuge in the United Nations Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS) compound, leading to the deaths of at least 50 women, men and children. Many more were injured, including two peacekeepers.

Earlier this week, Mr. Dieng and I travelled to Bor and met several of the survivors, who described the assault to us and expressed fears of being targeted on the grounds of their ethnicity or of their being perceived as supporters of one or other of the warring sides. Thankfully, the strong intervention of Indian peacekeepers prevented hundreds more from being killed or injured.

UNMISS has performed commendably in opening its doors to some 80,000 people and has been sheltering and protecting them as best it can. However, several community leaders told us that they were terrified of further attacks and wish to be moved from the United Nations compound to places of safety. UNICEF reports that more than 9,000 children have been recruited into armed forces by both sides. Thirty-two schools have been taken over by military forces, and there have been more than 20 attacks on clinics and health centres. Children have also been killed during indiscriminate attacks on civilians by both sides.

Since December, we have seen versions of such targeted ethnic violence in Malakal and dozens of other, smaller towns across the country, as well as in Juba itself. The accelerating cycles of revenge are now such that the slaughters in Bentiu and Bor could ignite further violence. Some of those key state capitals have changed hands numerous times since the conflict started, either following fighting or after the other party retreated, leaving civilians more vulnerable to attacks.

Elements on all sides of the conflict have called publicly for their supporters to hunt down other ethnic groups. Harking back grimly to the events that led up to the Rwandan genocide, following their capture of Bentiu this month rebels commandeered a local radio station and urged supporters to take revenge, including by raping women from other communities. Even more recently, according to media reports, the Governor of the Lakes region told a gathering of youths last weekend,

> "What we are doing today is eye for eye. You pinch me, I pinch you too — no forgiveness. If someone pinches you time and again and you do not do the same, you are creating a point of weakness in yourself."

Such statements by senior public officials fuel violence. President Kiir told us that he hated revenge. I urged him to make his statement known publicly in order to stem the continued violence. Riek Machar acknowledged the need for a political solution, stating that he "hates the situation that he is in" and would be open to peace talks.

A matter of pressing urgency is the looming humanitarian disaster. The rainy season has begun, meaning that the planting season is already half over, which raises the spectre of widespread famine. Mr. Dieng and I have urged leaders on both sides to observe a 30-day ceasefire to allow people to return to their fields to plant as much as possible. Shockingly, their reactions indicated that this was not an overriding concern.

Last month I said, with respect to impunity and accountability before the Council, that the pervasive culture of impunity in South Sudan had fuelled the current violence and that it was critical that the capacities of the domestic judicial system to effectively address accountability be established without delay. Only clear and decisive moves towards accountability can hope to stop the cycles of revenge killings and re-establish a sense of common destiny across the country.

During our mission, Mr. Dieng and I conveyed that concern to President Salva Kiir and five senior Cabinet Ministers in his Government. We also travelled to Nassir, where we discussed the killings in Bentiu with opposition leader Riek Machar, the former vice-President of South Sudan, since the attacks were carried out by forces associated with the Sudan People's Liberation Movement/Army in Opposition, which he leads. The Government said that it is investigating the mass killings of civilians in Juba in mid-December, and Mr. Machar similarly assured us that he would investigate the slaughter in Bentiu, adding that he would do his utmost to stop his forces from attacking civilians.

I welcome those commitments to investigate, but as I said this week to my various interlocutors, such investigations must be independent, transparent and consistent with international standards, and they must move swiftly to take action against alleged perpetrators in order to reassure a terrified civilian population that the escalation of ethnic violence will not continue to intensify.

Unfortunately, I am not convinced that this will be the case. I fear that South Sudan's leaders are locked in a purely personal power struggle, with little or no regard for the appalling suffering that it inflicts on their people. Mr. Dieng and I warned them that they will inevitably be the subject of international investigations regarding the extent of their knowledge of war crimes and crimes against humanity committed by subordinates under their authority and their failure to take reasonable steps to prevent such crimes.

With regard to the peace negotiations, international pressure has had some effect on the deadlock between President Kiir and Mr. Machar. Last week, in what was perceived as a gesture of reconciliation, the Government released four prisoners whom it had accused of plotting a coup. On Monday, peace talks between the warring sides reopened in Addis Ababa under the auspices of the regional East Africa bloc, the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD). And today, I understand that United States Secretary of State John Kerry has announced that the two leaders have agreed to meet.

I was able to meet in Addis Ababa with the head of the IGAD mediation team, the African Union Commissioner for Political Affairs and the Ethiopian State Minister of Foreign Affairs. IGAD is pushing for the quick deployment of the proposed protection and deterrent force, which will provide protection for the monitoring and verification teams responsible for monitoring the implementation of the cessation of hostilities signed in January. The IGAD head sees that as, in his words, "a game changer" in reducing the ongoing violence. Despite egregious violations of the cessation of hostilities by both parties, the monitoring and verification teams have not investigated any reported violations.

As I was reminded by the Ambassador during our meeting, more people have been killed after the cessation of hostilities was signed than before. I call on the Security Council to support the IGAD initiative. The deployment of the protection force will help save lives in the short run. The force should be deployed only if it has a clear mandate that supports the political resolution of the conflict.

I also met with four members of the African Union commission of inquiry. They have just returned from their first visit to South Sudan, where they met with internally displaced persons and victims in furtherance of their mandate to inquire into accountability, justice and reconciliation. The Commission will require substantial support if it is effectively to fulfil its mandate, including a fully staffed secretariat with the required expertise. My office stands ready to support the commission whenever requested.

IGAD and regional leaders share the same outrage as the rest of the world. They see the conflict as a

showdown between two leaders for political power and the control of oil revenues.

With regard to international action and recommendations, in December the Council agreed that the number of UNMISS peacekeepers should be increased from 7,700 to 13,200. However, the contributing countries have still not supplied some two-thirds of the extra troops. They are desperately needed. I trust that the members of the Council will do their utmost to ensure that UNMISS can count on a full complement of peacekeepers, as well as an adequate budget. The world's youngest country has a long history of suffering. Its people look to the Council to exert its authority to ensure a speedy political solution to this dreadful conflict.

The President: I thank Ms. Pillay for her briefing.

I now give the floor to Mr. Dieng.

Mr. Dieng: First, I would like to thank the President of the Security Council, Ambassador Oh Joon, and other Council members for inviting me to brief this meeting.

The Secretary-General, Mr. Ban Ki-moon, asked the High Commissioner for Human Rights, Navi Pillay, and I to travel to South Sudan this week to follow up on the recent brutal attacks against civilians that took place in the northern town of Bentiu, including in places of worship and hospitals, and within a United Nations base where internally displaced persons were sheltering, in Bor. We are very grateful to Special Representative of the Secretary-General Hilde Johnson and the staff of the United Nations Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS) for the support they provided to our very brief but intense mission. I will restrict my remarks to elements that are relevant to my mandate.

The violence that broke out on 15 December 2013, following a power struggle within the ruling Sudan People's Liberation Movement between former Vice-President Riek Machar and President Salva Kiir, has quickly degenerated into ethnic violence. The recent brutal attacks in Bentiu, in Unity state, and Bor, in Jonglei state, seem to have changed the trajectory of the conflict, and if such attacks are not immediately halted they could plunge the country into serious violence that could spiral out of control. In the current situation, we see elements that we could categorize as risk factors for genocide and other atrocity crimes.

In Bentiu, more than 200 civilians of Dinka ethnicity were massacred and more than 400 others wounded, reportedly by opposition forces allied to former Vice-President Riek Machar. According to United Nations reports, the attackers separated ethnic Dinka from ethnic Nuer civilians and then executed the Dinka and others perceived to support the Government.

In Bor, armed elements reportedly affiliated with the Government forced entry into the UNMISS camp, in which displaced persons had been sheltering. They killed more than 50 civilians, mostly of Nuer ethnicity, and wounded around 100 others. That attack was allegedly carried out in revenge for the capture of Bentiu town by opposition forces. In our meeting with the internally displaced persons in Bor, they expressed fear that the attacks could recur at any time and pleaded with the United Nations to relocate them to somewhere safer, preferably Akobo. They said that they knew some of the perpetrators and that they did not feel safe in Bor, where they risked being targeted simply because they were Nuer. The UNMISS commander in Bor corroborated the statements of the internally displaced persons and informed us that the recent attack was well organized and that the attackers included individuals in uniforms of the army of South Sudan, the Sudan People's Liberation Army (SPLA).

Another cause for serious concern has been the reported use of radio in some areas to spread messages constituting incitement to violence against all those perceived to support the Government. It was reported that, in Bentiu, fighters allied with Mr. Riek Machar incited the civilian population to attack the Dinka, even encouraging their supporters to commit acts of sexual violence against women. That is totally unacceptable.

In our consultations with senior Government officials in Juba and with Mr. Machar, we noted with concern that both sides either denied attacks against civilians or justified them on the grounds that they were carried out in self-defence against a vengeful group. If we are to ensure the protection of the civilian population in the country, the State must acknowledge that it has the primary responsibility to protect all South Sudanese, irrespective of nationality, ethnicity or political affiliation, and prioritize that responsibility. Blaming one group or another is simply irresponsible and dangerous.

UNMISS is doing its best in very difficult circumstances and should be commended. All leaders in South Sudan must assume greater responsibility to ensure that those under their authority do not commit

serious violations of international human rights and humanitarian law. They should send strong messages to call for the unity and respect of all South Sudanese and take immediate measures to end the violence. I am glad that, in our meetings this week, both President Salva Kiir and Mr. Riek Machar affirmed their will to do so. I hope that they will now take concrete steps to act on their commitments.

Reports of the homogenization of security forces by both camps are worrying as we consider the risk of atrocity crimes. The perception that those supporting Riek Machar are predominantly ethnic Nuer and those supporting President Kiir are predominantly Dinka has heightened the risk that individuals could be systematically targeted on the basis of ethnicity. That polarization is further compounded by reports of exclusion and discrimination on the basis of ethnicity. For example, in Bor the internally displaced persons reported to us that they had been denied access to medical care by Government officials because they were Nuer.

The culture of impunity in South Sudan has contributed immensely to the current crisis. As we search for peace in that young nation, we must also ensure that those responsible for crimes committed there are held to account. There can be no peace without justice. The current culture of impunity will only undermine our efforts. We have learned this the hard way from events in other places, including the genocide of the Tutsis that took place 20 years ago in Rwanda. To the survivors of the genocide, we owe a pledge to take all possible measures within our power to protect populations from another Rwanda. There is no excuse for inaction.

In this regard, I welcome the mediation efforts of the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) and the role of the African Union's commission of inquiry on South Sudan, which aim to end the violence and to bring justice to the victims. Both President Kiir and Riek Machar informed us that they were investigating any serious violations committed by their respective forces and that those found responsible would be held accountable. We should hold them to that commitment.

In our meeting with the members of the African Union commission of inquiry on South Sudan, I reiterated the expectations of the international community that the work of the commission would be independent, thorough and credible, and stressed that they should ensure that the commission not only seeks to pursue measures for reconciliation and national healing but also places emphasis on accountability measures. The members of the African Union commission of inquiry requested technical assistance from the United Nations, in particular the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights. We should do all we can to support their work. I was encouraged to note, from my discussions with IGAD, that the IGAD mediation envoys believe that accountability should be part and parcel of any agreement reached to end the fighting.

To conclude, we must continue to follow the situation in South Sudan closely, take whatever measures are most appropriate to protect the population from further suffering and prevent the situation from spiraling out of control. The risk that it could do so is clearly high, based on the risk factors that I have highlighted today. UNMISS has saved lives by opening its gates to protect the population in Bentiu, Bor, Malakal and other places. The Mission is under stress, however, and troop-contributing countries should expedite the deployment of additional troops as part of the UNMISS force surge to enhance its capacity to protect the population.

If the parties do not clearly demonstrate their will and intention to end the violence and attacks against civilians, including incitement to commit violence, I believe the Council should consider taking additional measures against the parties to prevent the situation from deteriorating further. We should all support efforts aimed at holding accountable those responsible for serious violations. The findings and recommendations of the report of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, which is about to be released, and other human rights reports must be acted on, including, first and foremost, by the national authorities.

Finally, the issue of weaknesses in governance must be addressed by development partners. In addition to the seeming disregard for the condition of the population, authorities have turned a blind eye to corruption. That corruption has also created a clear motivation for others to take up arms so that they can also access national resources for personal gain. Today's violence in South Sudan is not motivated by the desire to change the country, but rather by self-interested goals related to accessing oil wealth and development resources. The international community must not be complicit in this agenda. The prevention of further violence therefore

requires a coordinated international response that includes a new posture by development partners. Any resolution should take this into account.

We must uphold our collective responsibility to protect the populations of South Sudan from genocide, war crimes, ethnic cleansing and crimes against humanity and their incitement. Ethnicity must not be used as an excuse to incite violence or to demonize, exclude or attack any community or section of the population in South Sudan.

The President: I thank Mr. Dieng for his briefing.

I now give the floor to the members of the Council.

Ms. Power (United States of America): I would like to thank High Commissioner Pillay and Special Adviser Dieng for their disturbing briefings today.

My Government joins with them and others in condemning the outrageous and deliberate targeting of civilians in South Sudan. Instead of ceasing hostilities, as was pledged three months ago, the parties have chosen to intensify fighting and to do so in ways that have shredded humanitarian norms. In April, forces loyal to former Vice-President Machar attacked civilians in Bentiu, pursuing them into a hospital, a church and a mosque, killing at least 200 and likely many, many more, and leaving the dead lying in the streets. In Bor, against a backdrop of hostile rhetoric against the United Nations from senior South Sudanese Government officials, several hundred armed youths entered the camp of the United Nations Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS) by force and fired on displaced civilians in an ethnically motivated assault that was as cowardly as it was ruthless. The death toll in the clash exceeded 110, including 48 civilians who were fleeing for their lives.

Violence against civilians has also taken place in Juba, Malakal and Wau, accompanied by sexual abuse and recruitment of child soldiers. We have also heard of the ominous emergence of radio broadcasts that foment ethnic hate and incite further violence. And, as we all know, more fighting means more displaced civilians in need of safe haven and sustenance, more lives disrupted, more schools closed and an even larger burden for the increasingly hard-pressed United Nations relief agencies and donors.

We recall the jubilation less than three years ago when South Sudan achieved its independence. Amid honking horns and vivid expressions of national pride, cheering citizens raised their new flag and newly appointed diplomats took their seats in the General Assembly. Friends of South Sudan, who were familiar with the many sacrifices that preceded that day, celebrated. Exiles returned home to help the new nation get on its feet. The international community lent ample support, including a United Nations mission that pledged to work hand in hand with the Government and the Sudanese people to help build this new States. Civil society pitched in, and the vast majority of South Sudan's citizens focused on the hard work of bolstering their economy and building stronger communities.

But a country requires effective leadership, and in South Sudan, after a promising start, the leaders in office and in the opposition have chosen to place personal rivalries and suspicions above the best interests of their country. Those fuelling this conflict — many of them the very same individuals who were instrumental in bringing about South Sudan's independence — have chosen coercion over cooperation and violence over the democratic process. The result is catastrophe.

It is unconscionable that South Sudan's leaders have failed to take the steps necessary to restore peace and end the needless suffering of their people. The continuation of this failure could very well push the country further into a cycle of retaliatory ethnic killing, a deepening civil war and an even more devastating humanitarian disaster that will further worsen with the full onset of the seasonal rains and the looming prospect of famine. To prevent this, we call on all sides to do right by the people of South Sudan, who place their trust in them, and by the international community, which stood by them for decades and promised to roll up their sleeves and help build their new country.

We call on South Sudan's leaders to cease military action, as they promised to do when they signed the cessation-of-hostilities agreement. They must allow UNMISS to carry out its mandate, without harassment, threats or fear of assault, to protect the people of South Sudan. They must respect the rights and dignity of every citizen regardless of his or her ethnicity, enable the unfettered delivery of humanitarian supplies, stop the warlike rhetoric and incitement to violence, and publicly condemn any and all attacks on civilians. They must return in good faith to the peace process moderated by the Intergovernmental Authority on Development; cooperate with United Nations and African Union human rights investigators and monitors, and resolve their differences by peaceful means. And they cannot

just promise to do all this, as they have before. They must mean it, and do it, and do it now.

Primary responsibility for ending the violence in the Sudan rests with the country's leaders, but there are helpful steps that the Council and the international community can take. On 3 April, the President of the United States issued an executive order providing for targeted sanctions against those individuals determined to have contributed to atrocities or taken actions harmful to peace and stability in South Sudan. The Council should urgently consider whether to put in place parallel targeted Security Council sanctions so as to try to deter the outrageous attacks on civilians of the kind we saw in Bor and Bentiu last month. We will also, of course, never give up on diplomacy.

Earlier today, Secretary of State John Kerry was in Juba, where he reiterated to President Kiir both the support of the international community to the people of South Sudan and our refusal to stand by if the country's leaders continue to go down the path of violence and destruction rather than that of negotiation and cooperation. President Kiir has said that he will implement the cessation-of-hostilities agreement immediately and meet directly with former Vice-President Machar. We have heard many promises from South Sudanese leaders, with no follow-up. We hope, for the sake of the people of South Sudan who are suffering through this terrifying crisis, that this time is different. And we urge President Kiir and Riek Machar to swiftly agree on a date for face-to-face talks.

The meeting is an emergency meeting, and should be treated as such by both sides. Every day the ethnic polarization and violence is growing worse. I emphasize that the United States strongly supports the critical work of the United Nations Mission in South Sudan, as well as the relief agencies doing their best in difficult conditions to meet the needs of men, women and children in dire straits. I remind the Government of South Sudan that it has an obligation to the international community to prevent attacks on the United Nations and those agencies. That means, to repeat it again, that the Government itself must cease intimidation, harassment and slander of the United Nations Mission and its personnel.

In the coming days, my Government will join in circulating a draft resolution that will revise the UNMISS mandate so that it focuses more fully on civilian protection, human rights monitoring and investigation, and the delivery of food and other emergency supplies. Given the key role UNMISS plays, the Council should take up that draft resolution with the urgency that this crisis demands.

Those who choose the path of further violence and hatred have been given fair notice. No one has licence to attack United Nations peacekeepers, international monitors or civilian non-combatants of any nationality or ethnicity. No one has the right to target others because of their ethnicity, to incite violence or breach the protective walls of a United Nations base. Those who ignore this warning should have no doubt that the international community will do all within its power to hold those individuals accountable. The culture of impunity must end.

My colleagues, it is imperative that we remain determined and united in pressing the Government and leading opposition figures in South Sudan to reverse their dangerous course and genuinely, actually, pursue peace. Last month, the world stopped for a moment to remember the genocide that took place in Rwanda 20 years ago. President Kiir attended that ceremony to pay his respects. Now President Kiir, former Vice-President Machar and other rebel leaders have a duty to themselves and their fellow citizens to pull their country back from the abyss. It is not too late, but the window is closing.

Mr. Quinlan (Australia): Thank you, Mr. President, for convening this important briefing in the open Chamber. I would also like to thank High Commissioner Pillay and Special Adviser Dieng for their forthright and very disturbing briefings. Their visit was an essential one, and the Council itself must ensure that their immediate report back to us is instrumental.

All of us have been appalled by the horrifying events in Bentiu and Bor, where just weeks ago hundreds of men, women and children were targeted in ethnic killings while seeking refuge in a hospital, a mosque, a church and a United Nations base — all places that should be inviolate, as they are protected under international law. The use of radio broadcasts to incite ethnic killings and sexual violence against women and girls is chilling and frighteningly resonant of mass atrocities elsewhere. The image of slain child soldiers, their lifeless bodies still clutching AK-47s as they lay dead in the streets, is harrowing.

Australia's Foreign Minister Bishop, along with so many other world leaders, has strongly condemned this violence, whose scale and intensity represent a grim new

chapter of a brutal conflict that has already claimed the lives of many thousands of civilians and displaced more than a million. Until this cycle is broken, more atrocities will occur, inevitably, and many more lives will be lost, inevitably. Our message to all parties to this conflict is simple. There can be no military solution.

President Salva Kiir and Mr. Riek Machar must uphold their responsibility to protect civilians, regardless of ethnicity or political affiliation. They must immediately commit themselves and their forces to a ceasefire and engage sincerely in the peace process led by the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD). We commend IGAD and Ethiopia for their leadership and for the invaluable role they continue to play as partners for peace and stability in the region.

We welcome the imminent release of the report of the United Nations Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS) on human rights violations. No party to the conflict should be under the illusion that there will be anything less than full accountability for the crimes against humanity and war crimes we expect it to detail. In accordance with the principle of command responsibility, leaders will be held to account for their subordinates' actions. Impunity cannot persist, nor can blanket amnesties be entertained. The legacy of a lack of accountability is among the drivers perpetuating the conflict.

We welcome the African Union commission of inquiry and express our continued support to President Obasanjo and his team. It will remain open for the Council to consider referring the situation in South Sudan to the International Criminal Court once we have had the opportunity to consider the Commission's recommendations.

As a Council, our obligation now is to help pull the country back from the brink, confronted as we are by grave and persistent human rights violations, extreme protection challenges and a worsening humanitarian crisis. The situation clearly invokes the principle of responsibility to protect. We commend the swift action of UNMISS to establish protection sites in the early stages of the conflict, saving countless lives. That is why the United Nations exists. The commitment of the United Nations and Special Representative of the Secretary-General Johnson to the protection of civilians is a statement of their concern and determination to help the South Sudanese people. The Government of South Sudan must now state unequivocally its support for UNMISS and extend seriousfull cooperation to it.

We must move urgently to recast the UNMISS mandate to give the Mission clearer, more focused priorities, with the protection of civilians at its core. The new mandate should reaffirm the neutrality and impartiality of UNMISS, and freeze most State-building tasks until the fighting stops and a pathway to genuine peace is established. We must work with the peacekeeping partnership — the Council, the Secretariat and troop- and police-contributing countries — to deploy the requisite peacekeepers much faster, and we must equip them with the mandate, tools and mobility they need to protect civilians adequately.

The crucial next step is to expand the security footprint beyond the camps of internally displaced persons to protect more civilians at grave risk. And we support the proposed deployment of an IGAD protection force to allow IGAD's monitors to perform their task. With the spectre of famine looming, we must spare no effort to facilitate humanitarian access so that life-saving assistance can reach those people in most need. Any action to deny, delay or otherwise obstruct such access is unacceptable. My own country has provided over $10 million in emergency aid to date since the crisis began. We encourage Member States to give generously to the South Sudan humanitarian appeals.

As the fighting in oil-rich Upper Nile and Unity states demonstrates, competition over natural resources and their revenues is another important driver of that conflict. The proliferation and ready availability of small arms, light weapons and ammunition is further fuelling the fighting.

The Council has instruments, in addition to peacekeeping, that it can apply to mitigate the intensity of the conflict and bring a measure of protection to the people of South Sudan. We believe it is time for the Council to consider applying an arms embargo. Australia also supports the application of financial and travel sanctions against instigators of violence and perpetrators of human rights abuses in South Sudan. Those who stand in the way of peace must pay a price for their actions. Targeted sanctions are a lever to curb the protagonists' behaviour and bring them back to dialogue.

In conclusion, while South Sudan's leaders are engaged in a bitter and bloody power struggle in the pursuit of their own narrow self-interest, the suffering of the South Sudanese people grows more and more

acute. That is an unforgivable betrayal to the world's youngest nation. We must heed the crystal clear call to action we have heard today and accelerate the Council's response.

Mr. Laro (Nigeria): I too thank United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights Pillay and Under-Secretary-General Special Adviser to the Secretary-General on the Prevention of Genocide Dieng for their briefings.

Nigeria followed with keen interest the visit of High commissioner Pillay and Special Adviser Dieng to South Sudan. We welcome the engagement of the United Nations with the Government of South Sudan, as well as the opposition. What began as intraparty political dispute last December, which could have been and, indeed, should have been resolved through dialogue, has degenerated to the point where the very future of South Sudan is now severly threatened.

Four months into the conflict, we are now seeing events that have all the hallmarks of mass atrocity crimes. Nigeria strongly condemns those crimes. High Commissioner Pillay has rightly described the situation in South Sudan as a

> "deadly mix of recrimination, hate speech and revenge killings that has developed relentlessly over the past four and a half months and is now reaching a boiling point".

The situation is looking dangerously similar to that which preceeded the genocide against the Tutsi in Rwanda, which took place 20 years ago. The world has collectively said "Never again" to genocide. It is time for us to stand firmly by that solemn pledge.

As the body charged with maintaining international peace and security, we see the need for strong deterrent action by the Council to put a stop to the slaughter of innocent civilians on the basis of ethnicity, religion or whatever consideration. We call for the arrest and prosecution of the perpetrators and instigators of the mass killings in Bentiu and Bor in order to discourage impunity.

On another note, we welcome the resumption of peace talks this week by the Government and opposition and commend the mediation role of the Intergovernmental Authority on Development in that regard. We reiterate Nigeria's position that there cannot be a military solution to the conflict. We urge both parties to the conflict to embrace dialogue as the only path to sustainable peace, security and stability in South Sudan.

With thousands killed and millions displaced, ending the conflict in South Sudan is a matter of extreme urgency. The millions of displaced South Sudanese cannot wait while the politicians dither — enough of the bloodshed, enough of the hardship. The time for peace is now and the Council, as well as the international community, must continue to take all necessary steps to support South Sudan in that regard.

Mr. Shen Bo (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): I too would like to thank United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights Pillay and Special Adviser to the Secretary-General on the Prevention of Genocide Dieng for their briefings.

The bloody conflict triggered by the political strife in South Sudan has lasted for almost five months and caused tremendous civilian casualties and a sharp increase in internally displaced persons. The security and humanitarian situation is grave. China is deeply concerned about the situation. We urge both parties to the conflict in South Sudan to reach a ceasefire and end violence immediately to effectively implement the cessation-of-hostilities agreement and settle their differences through dialogue.

China supports the political mediation efforts led by the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) and urges both parties to the conflict in South Sudan to cooperate with the IGAD mediation efforts and settle their differences in the framework of negotiations. We welcome the recent resumption of talks between the two parties under the auspices of IGAD and call upon the international community to coordinante with the IGAD-led mediation efforts, support the expeditious deployment of IGAD's ceasefire monitoring team, and leverage its constructive influence through their respective channels to advance the political talks.

China strongly condemns the violent attack that targeted civilians, the compound of the United Nations Mission in South Sudan and peacekeepers in South Sudan. China urges the parties to the conflict to protect the security and safety of civilians, including foreigners and peacekeepers, and to investigate the incident. We welcome the despatch of the African Union commission of inquiry to conduct on-site investigations.

China is following the humanitarian situation in South Sudan with close attention and is cooperating fully

with the United Nations Mission in South Sudan and the Government of South Sudan to start the construction of a temporary camp for internally displaced persons in Juba as soon as possible. We call on the international community to step up its assistance to South Sudan and to honour its commitment to helping the people of thye Sudan to weather the crisis.

Since the outbreak of the crisis, China has worked hard and contributed constructively through various means to promote peace efforts and talks. The special representative of the Chinese Government on African affairs has repeatedly carried out mediation efforts between the parties to the conflict and the countries of the region. China has decided to offer financial support to the IGAD mechanisms. We shall continue to provide humanitarian assistance to South Sudan within our capabilities.

Mr. Cherif (Chad) (*spoke in French*): At the outset, I should like to thank the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, Ms. Navanethem Pillay, and the Special Adviser to the Secretary-General on the Prevention of Genocide, Mr. Adama Dieng, for their briefings. I also thank the Secretary-General for his initiative to despatch a high-level mission to South Sudan to further clarify for the Council the most recent attacks on civilians in the country.

Chad once again expresses its concern at the widespread violence perpetrated in Bentiu and Bor, which has led to hundreds of deaths and wounded many more people, including women and children. We strongly condemn the systematic targeting of civilians on the basis of their ethnic origins and the use of radio broadcasts to incite hatred and sexual violence, not to mention the persecution in places that should be safe, including mosques, churches and hospitals.

The two parties are seeking a military solution on the ground instead of a negotiated solution, the prospects for which seem ever weaker, despite mediation efforts, especially those deployed under the auspices of the Intergovernmental Authority on Development, to revive negotiations. In this regard, we urgently call on the international community to bring pressure to bear on the parties to immediate cease violence against civilians and sites protected by the United Nations Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS), and to commit to an inclusive peace process. We reiterate our unmitigated support for the peacekeeping forces of UNMISS, who are working in very difficult situations to protect civilians in South Sudan.

We welcome the decision made by neighbouring countries and countries of the region to send troops to aid in the protection of civilians, which is a priority of the UNMISS mandate. We welcome the freeing of four political prisoners and hope that it will have a positive effect on the peace talks. We condemn all attacks on civilians and United Nations facilities, and call on all of the parties concerned to immediately cease acts of intimidation and harassment against UNMISS in order to allow it to fully implement its mandate. We welcome the assessment carried out by the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights regarding recent events and we eagerly await its report. We hope that the first mission of the African Union commission of inquiry currently under way can shed further light on these attacks so that the perpetrators of the atrocious acts may face justice.

We call once again on all parties concerned to choose the path of dialogue and national reconciliation in the interests of the people of South Sudan.

Mr. Pankin (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): We are grateful to Ms. Pillay and Mr. Dieng for their briefings on the findings of their visit to crisis-torn South Sudan. We share their profound concern at the mass violations of human rights and the norms of international humanitarian law by both parties to the conflict, including the monstrous killing of civilians on ethnic grounds. This is particularly troubling in the light of the diverse character of the young society of South Sudan. Among the most glaring examples of the clashes between these two camps were the crimes perpetrated in Bentiu and Bor, which could amount to war crimes.

We hope that the visit by Ms. Pillay and Mr. Dieng will push the parties towards practical implementation of their stated intentions to prevent such crimes in the future and to bring to justice all of those responsible. We trust that next week's report from the United Nations Mission to South Sudan (UNMISS) on the human rights situation there will be substantive and make a genuine contribution to tackling challenges with regards to establishing the truth and combating the deep-rooted culture of impunity that reigns in the country.

We welcome the activities of the African Union commission of inquiry on South Sudan, which should effectively complement United Nations

efforts in this area, including with the development of recommendations for addressing the root causes of the conflict and fostering a process of national reconciliation. We are particularly concerned at reports of an impending humanitarian catastrophe in South Sudan. The number of people displaced by violence now exceeds 1.2 million. Approximately 5 million people require humanitarian assistance, and the number is growing rapidly. The genuine threat of mass starvation in the country looms large.

We agree that the path towards addressing the grave humanitarian and human rights situation lies in a political settlement of the armed conflict. The leaders of both warring parties must finally set aside their own ambitions and begin seeking a solution to the crisis through peaceful means by implementing the agreement of 23 January. We strongly welcome the vigorous efforts of international partners, especially the Intergovernmental Authority on Development, seeking a negotiated solution and ceasefire. The international community, represented inter alia by the Council, must duly support those efforts in a timely fashion.

With regard to the recent and growing calls for the adoption of targeted Security Council sanctions against so-called saboteurs of the peace process in South Sudan, this is an issue that should be addressed extremely warily and cautiously. This subject needs to be fully fleshed out, taking into account both internal and regional factors. Our extensive collective experience shows that sanctions are far from a panacea and never have been an effective instrument for achieving political settlements to conflicts. What they can do, however, is undermine the spirit of cooperation. Moreover, it is important to canvass the opinions of leading regional actors on such an initiative.

The latest tragic events have again called into question the effectiveness of the leadership of the United Nations Mission to South Sudan. Despite a budget of almost $1 billion, a large contingent and robust mandate, it has proven unable to fully guarantee the protection of civilians, even on the grounds of its own compounds, which, incidentally, are not designed to host tens of thousands of civilians for long periods. The scheduled mandate review and increase in the maximum force strength should be geared specifically towards improving the performance of its activities and implementing the tasks mandated to it by the Security Council.

In conclusion, we must note that the current events in South Sudan are just the latest sad result of the fanciful scheming of Juba's main partners, who have sought to hide the truth and cover up for their stooges.

Sir Mark Lyall Grant (United Kingdom): I thank you, Mr. President, for convening this meeting on the dire situation facing the people of South Sudan. I would like to thank High Commissioner Pillay and Under-Secretary-General Dieng for their timely visit to South Sudan and for their briefings to us today.

A million people have been displaced, and millions more are in need of humanitarian relief because of the unfolding conflict in South Sudan. Today, we have heard about chilling human rights violations and abuses, and the horrors go on. The South Sudanese people are bearing the highest costs and now face the risk of famine. Targeted attacks on civilians, including the recent attacks in Bentiu on those in hospitals and places of worship and targeting those under United Nations protection in Bor, demonstrate the extreme vulnerability of civilians in conflict.

The very clear ethnic dimension to the conflict in South Sudan is particularly alarming. Just over two weeks ago, the international community commemorated the twentieth anniversary of the Rwandan genocide. That meeting was a sober reminder of what can happen when, faced with clear evidence of atrocities, we collectively fail to act. The ethnic motivations behind targeted attacks on civilians in South Sudan should serve as a wake-up call to us all. The use of radio, for example, in Bentiu to incite ethnically motivated violence and sexual violence harkens back to the tragic events in Rwanda two decades ago. We must get better at using tools to counter that practice, including the United Nations own use of public information broadcasts in the country.

On human rights, it is clear that serious abuses and violations have taken place and continue to take place as the conflict drags on. The use of sexual violence as a weapon of war and the recruitment of children as combatants by both sides in the conflict are particularly concerning. UNICEF estimates that more than 9,000 children have now been recruited by both sides.

I thank High Commissioner Pillay and Under-Secretary-General Dieng for delivering the urgent concerns of the international community to the leaders of both sides in the conflict. We expect President Kiir and former Vice-President Riek Machar to act immediately

on those concerns. All political leaders must take full personal responsibility for continued fighting and the plight of the people. They must take immediate action to curb violations and abuses of human rights, engage seriously in peace talks, and enable full humanitarian access. We have said that before, but those steps have not been taken, and the needs become ever more urgent.

Looking forward, we need to focus on three areas of activity.

First, we must end impunity. Accountability and justice are essential to national healing and reconciliation. Allegations of violations and abuse must be thoroughly and impartially investigated. Those responsible must be held to account. We support the African Union commission of inquiry and look forward to the outcome of its investigations. But with different domestic, African Union and United Nations work under way in the area, it would be helpful for the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) to set out the different available tracks for accountability in South Sudan. In addition, we request OHCHR to consider a thorough investigation and to report on the atrocities recently committed in Bentiu and Bor. We also look to the Human Rights Council to take appropriate action in response to the human rights situation in South Sudan.

Secondly, we must increase political support to the mediation effort. The international community, including the Security Council, must consider all available levers and tools in the effort to deter a devastating slide towards repeated mass atrocities and protracted conflict. The focus, responsibility and priorities we give the United Nations Mission in South Sudan are only part of the answer. The ultimate responsibility lies with those leading the war effort. We must continue to send strong and clear messages that the international community cannot accept the current situation. We support the tireless mediation efforts of the Intergovernmental Authority on Development in the search for lasting peace in South Sudan. Women and civil society must play a role in that. But those mediation efforts may need to be complemented by targeted sanctions against those who obstruct peace and by reducing the arms available to those involved in the conflict.

Thirdly, the safety of millions of innocent civilians in South Sudan must remain paramount. With the continued fighting and the impending rains, the already acute humanitarian situation could become a humanitarian disaster. Famine lies around the corner. Millions could be condemned to untold suffering that would take decades to rectify. The needs are urgent and clear. The onus is on the international community to help meet those needs. We must increase the humanitarian response as quickly as possible. The British Government will do its part and has released an additional amount of approximately $65 million for the humanitarian response.

The situation in South Sudan is urgent. The South Sudanese people have suffered far too long. The international community has the tools to alleviate that suffering. We must act and we must do so quickly.

Mr. Gasana (Rwanda): Mr. President, I thank you for convening this briefing on the human rights situation in South Sudan. I thank Ms. Navi Pillay, United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, and Mr. Adama Dieng, Special Adviser to the Secretary-General on the Prevention of Genocide, for their respective briefings following their recent visit to South Sudan. I would also like to recognize the Ambassador of South Sudan, Ambassador Deng.

We appreciate the Secretary-General's dispatch of several United Nations teams to South Sudan to monitor the situation on the ground and for his unequivocal messages to both the South Sudan leadership and the Sudan People's Liberation Movement/Army in Opposition.

On 14 July 2011, the General Assembly adopted resolution 65/308, introduced by Rwanda on behalf of the African Group, admitting the Republic of South Sudan as the 193rd State Member of the United Nations. As we admitted that young nation, it was with hope, anticipation and pride that the international community stood ready to accompany South Sudan as it built its State institutions and forged a united South Sudan for all its citizens. However, three years later, considering the widespread killing of civilians and the human rights situation described by our briefers today and emphasized by Ambassador Samantha Power, we cannot remain bystanders. We cannot remain bystanders.

You cannot fight for independence for years and then turn around and kill our own people. It is a shame. Almost five months have passed since the beginning of the conflict in South Sudan. Hundreds of innocent civilians have been killed due to their ethnicity and political affiliation; 1.5 million civilians have been

displaced. All of that has been happening while the world is watching. During our most recent consultations on South Sudan, held on 23 April, we were shown very painful images of hundreds of dead bodies piled on the ground. For Rwandans like me, those images take us back to 20 years ago. After the 1994 genocide against the Tutsi, the international community said, "Never again". Now we say, "lessons learned". That has — unfortunately, we believe — become just a cosmetic word. It is, again, a real shame.

What do we do now about the continued killings of innocent civilians in South Sudan? What do we do about the recent mass atrocities committed against civilians in Bentiu and in Bor? Or, for that case, what do we do now when we hear a radio station which, 20 years after the infamous RTLM broadcasts in Rwanda, has called upon one group of the community to rape women of another group in retribution? Do we again condemn and adopt statements expressing outrage?

Recently Ambassador Joy Ogwu of Nigeria, during her last meeting as President of the Council (see S/PV.7166), expressed regret that sometimes we become bystanders and display a lack of unity in the Council, due to national interests. I hope that on this issue, the Council will do whatever it takes to stop the killing of innocent people in South Sudan. That being said, we commend the men and women of the United Nations Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS) who, under intense pressure, opened their compound to the civilian population in distress, saving thousands of innocent lives. I recall that while in Kigali during the twentieth commemoration of the genocide against the Tutsi, the Secretary-General made an important statement, very clearly. He said,

> "I have sent my own signal to United Nations representatives around the world. My message to them is simply this: When you see people at risk of atrocity crimes, do not wait for instructions from afar; speak up, even if it may offend. Act. Our first duty must always be to protect people — to protect human beings in need and distress." (*SG/SM/15755*)

But we definitely need to do more. There are millions of people outside of UNMISS compounds who still need our protection. As UNMISS compounds cannot also receive Sudanese under threat, we should find a way to stop what is going on there, without wasting further time.

Rwanda's Minister for Foreign Affairs, Ms. Louise Mushikiwabo, stated on Saturday in Nairobi, "Let us stop this idea that people have to die when we want power. Let us distance citizens from power differences". We believe that it is the primary responsibility of the Government of South Sudan to protect civilians from mass atrocities. That responsibility shifts to the Sudan People's Liberation Movement/Army in Opposition (SPLM/A) in the areas under its control.

Why do innocent children, women and men always pay the price when politicians are fighting for power? Why? Let us be clear. Leaders shall be held responsible for all atrocities committed by people under their control. Indeed, they bear command responsibility. I prod the leaders of South Sudan to envision the future of their country after this crisis. The choices and opportunities that they have today to solve the crisis may not exist in the future.

As we welcome the resumption of negotiations among the parties, in Addis Ababa this week, I would like to point out three key elements that Rwanda believes will improve the current situation in South Sudan, if they are given priority.

First, the parties must immediately cease hostilities and stop the continuing killing of innocent civilians. That will save thousands of displaced people from the humanitarian crisis, especially during the upcoming rainy season, which will further aggravate the situation. The parties have signed the ceasefire, but regrettably they have not abided by their commitments. This time, the international community should use all necessary means to convince the parties to cease their hostilities if, of course, they cannot do so themselves. They should ensure full respect for the cessation-of hostilities-agreement. I urge both parties to fully cooperate with the monitoring and verification mechanism led by the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD). It is also urgent that the United Nations and IGAD agree, as soon as possible, on how the mechanism, which includes the deployment of a protection and deterrent force, can be supported in order to fulfil its mandate. We wish the parties to have the same understanding of the mechanism.

Secondly, it is an obligation of the international community, including the Council, to make sure that all perpetrators of atrocity crimes in South Sudan are brought to justice. In that regard, we encourage both the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for

Human Rights and the African Union commission of inquiry on South Sudan to expedite their investigations so that the perpetrators are held accountable. In the meantime, the fact that both President Salva Kiir and former Vice-President Reik Machar have committed themselves to investigating the human rights abuses committed by their respective combatants, especially the ethnic killings in Juba in December and the recent atrocities in Bentiu and Bor, is very encouraging and must be translated into tangible action.

Thirdly, with regard to the ongoing IGAD mediation in Addis Ababa, the parties should put their own interests behind the national interest and engage in a constructive dialogue with a view to finding a sustainable political solution. In that context, Rwanda welcomes the decision taken by President Kiir to release the four remaining detainees arrested following the outbreak of the crisis in December, and to drop the charges against them. While that will create a better environment for negotiations, the willingness recently expressed by President Kiir to hold direct talks with Mr. Machar is also commendable. Furthermore, we believe that the ongoing initiative of the SPLM intraparty dialogue, launched in Addis Ababa recently, could be another milestone towards identifying fault lines in South Sudan's political process and thus lead to the necessary political reforms. We take this opportunity to commend IGAD for its commitment to finding a solution to the crisis and look forward to the upcoming IGAD summit on the crisis in South Sudan.

As we continue to urge UNMISS to ensure the increased protection of civilians, the Secretariat needs to expedite the full deployment of additional troops through inter-mission cooperation, as authorized by resolution 2132 (2013). That is important in order to increase the Mission's protection capacity. In that regard, we urge all stakeholders, especially donors, to support the Mission on the ground and provide the air-lift capability necessary for the swift deployment of the required troops and police personnel. Furthermore, it is also important that the Government of South Sudan improve its relations with UNMISS and consider the Mission as a partner in the restoration of peace.

To conclude, I call on all of us to exercise our respective responsibilities to solve the crisis in South Sudan. The warring SPLM/A parties must stop the war and the killing of civilians and engage in a genuine dialogue. IGAD and the countries of the region should strive to help the parties find a solution to the conflict, and the United Nations must protect civilians effectively, ensure the end of hostilities and killings and ensure that the perpetrators in Bentiu, Bor and elsewhere in South Sudan are held accountable for their crimes.

I also look forward to the United States proposal of a draft resolution and to working together on that.

Mr. Araud (France) (*spoke in French*): I thank Ms. Navi Pillay, United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, and Mr. Adama Dieng, Special Adviser to the Secretary-General on the Prevention of Genocide, for their briefings.

The alarm raised by the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights cannot leave the Council indifferent. The situation in South Sudan is extremely serious. The country has become an area of lawlessness. Violations of human rights and international humanitarian law are increasing, including deliberate attacks against civilians, large-scale sexual violence and the recruitment of child soldiers. A cycle of reprisals has begun, fuelled by public calls to violence and hatred. Radio broadcasts intensify that vicious circle by calling for women from opposing communities to be raped. We are dealing with a dangerous drift into communitarian conflict, which is being exploited by both parties.

The humanitarian situation is equally disturbing. The number of displaced persons and refugees is increasing by the day. Nearly 5 million people are in need of humanitarian assistance. In particular, the situation in the United Nations Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS) camps, which are still home to almost 80,000 civilians, has deteriorated markedly. The rainy season will further exacerbate the situation, and there is a threat of famine.

Both parties are responsible for the tragic situation and the seriousness of the violations committed against the civil populations. The massacres of Bentiu and Bor have once again demonstrated that no one has a monopoly on violence or atrocities. We support the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) mediation efforts, but we must recognize that, today, the political process is at a standstill. While a ceasefire was signed on 23 January, the parties still refuse to engage in peace talks and act only on the basis of the territorial gains they can make, especially in oil-producing areas.

The Government of South Sudan, just like the opposition forces, must stop any incitement to hatred

and the attacks against United Nations staff. The resumption of talks in Addis Ababa on 28 April is an encouraging sign. We call, as IGAD has, for Mr. Salva Kiir and Mr. Riek Machar to meet face-to-face to end the vicious cycle of massacres and decide on a one-month truce, which will be essential for the South Sudanese to sow their fields.

While the authorities have the primary responsibility to protect their citizens, the international community should take the measures necessary to ensure the protection of populations under threat. The Council cannot remain indifferent to the situation in the country. That is why France supports a rapid review of the mandate of the United Nations Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS). All its capacities must be dedicated to enhancing protection for civilians, respect for human rights and free access to humanitarian aid.

Noting the lack of political will to reach a peace agreement, we also believe that the Security Council should consider the establishment of a sanctions regime against individuals who oppose the political process. To answer the legitimate questions asked by the Russian Federation, the regime could initially not name names but simply be used as a means to exert pressure on both parties.

The reign of impunity in South Sudan cannot continue. Independent and impartial investigations must be conducted immediately. The perpetrators must be tried and convicted, regardless of their political affiliation. The African Union's commission of inquiry must collect evidence on the crimes committed. The attacks, in particular those against United Nations bases, constitute war crimes. Given the exceptional gravity and scale of the crimes, and within the framework of a dialogue with IGAD and the African Union, we must also consider a referral to the International Criminal Court.

Mr. Hmoud (Jordan) (*spoke in Arabic*): I would like to thank the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, Ms. Navanethem Pillay, and the Special Adviser to the Secretary-General on the Prevention of Genocide, Mr. Adama Dieng, for the valuable information they have provided to us in their briefings. We would also like to express our thanks and appreciation to the entire staff of the United Nations Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS) and other international entities for their work in extremely difficult circumstances in South Sudan.

We would like to express our grave concern over the deterioration of the situation in South Sudan, the ongoing killings and the serious humanitarian violations by both parties to the conflict. We would also like to stress the importance of putting an immediate end to mutual incitement that contributes to the spread of hatred and the promotion of ethnic and tribal divisions within South Sudanese society. We would also like to stress the following points.

First, it is clear that, several months after the outbreak of the crisis in South Sudan, and despite the Council's full involvement, the tireless international efforts to contain the crisis and put an end to humanitarian suffering and the efforts deployed by African parties to translate the agreement on the cessation of hostilities into a basis on which we can build, we are still far from the lasting stability, political dialogue or national reconciliation that we all seek.

A solution to the crisis in South Sudan is directly linked to the fulfilment by both parties of their commitments and pledges undertaken under the agreement on the cessation of hostilities. That presupposes the willingness, ability and commitment of leaders in the field to implement such an agreement on the ground.

However, it has become clear that, despite the commitments made by the leaders of the two parties to the international community in bilateral encounters, the situation on the ground has further deteriorated. That in turn gives rise to doubts about the credibility of those parties in dealing with the international community and its efforts.

We have previously stressed the importance of identifying the areas most vulnerable to violations and of the deployment of efforts to protect civilians. We would like to once again stress the importance of preventive measures to avoid the recurrence of the events that recently took place in Bentiu and Bor. We must also stress the importance of taking into account the distribution of the population groupings most vulnerable to violations when deploying further forces.

In conclusion, we reiterate the need for the Government of South Sudan and the opposition to shoulder their responsibilities in bringing the perpetrators of violations and crimes to justice. The international community and the Security Council must bring pressure to bear on both parties in that regard and consider measures that could be taken with a view to

bringing criminals to justice, including the possibility of a referral to the International Criminal Court. We would like to stress what Ms. Pillay and Mr. Dieng have stated, that is, that there will be no peace without justice. Therefore, efforts should be undertaken to change the culture of impunity in South Sudan, and the Security Council should focus its efforts in line with that.

Ms. Murmokaitė (Lithuania): Thank you, Mr. President, for organizing this briefing. I would also like to thank the High Commissioner for Human Rights, Ms. Navanethem Pillay, and the Special Envoy for the Prevention of Genocide, Mr. Adama Dieng, for their extensive briefings.

Only last month we commemorated the twentieth anniversary of the Rwandan genocide (see S/PV.7155). As we adopted resolution 2150 (2014), we recommitted to preventing and fighting genocide and other serious crimes against humanity. We also reaffirmed the principle of the responsibility to protect populations from genocide, war crimes, ethnic cleansing and crimes against humanity. And yet, three years after South Sudan's independence, the reports from that country read like catalogues of barbarity, with all actors — Government forces, opposition and militias — committing shocking atrocities. Incitement, targeted killings, rape and torture are the typical ingredients that lead to a situation of genocide. Even places that are supposed to be considered safe shelters, such as places of worship, hospitals and United Nations bases, have been brutally attacked. The despicable attacks in Bor on the United Nations compound and the slaughter of civilians in mosques and churches in Bentiu deserve the strongest condemnation of the Council and the entire international community.

What is also troubling is a fact that the High Commissioner mentioned — that sowing season will likely be missed, and as many as 7 million people will soon face a terrible famine. And to think that the two rival leaders and their supporters would prefer to continue their bloody rivalry rather than grant one month of calm for the people to plant their crops, in order to save them from the horror of death by starvation. It is definitely very hard to confront such facts.

We note President Salva Kiir's statement earlier today that he is ready to meet face to face with Riek Machar. We have not heard a denial of that from Machar, and we assume that he is also ready to meet. It is absolutely crucial that the two leaders renounce and denounce all violence and call on their forces and supporters to lay down their arms, stop targeting civilians and pursue a path of genuine dialogue and reconciliation. Both the Government and the armed opposition must cooperate in investigating the horrendous crimes that have been committed. The perpetrators must be arrested and prosecuted with full respect for internationally recognized standards of due process. Accountability is a must. If there is no end to impunity, violence and atrocities will continue.

The Council must see to it that current and future investigations examine the extent to which political and military leaders knew or should have known about what was going on and failed to take all necessary and reasonable measures to prevent the war crimes and crimes against humanity committed by themselves or by subordinates under their effective control and authority. We welcome the efforts of the commission of inquiry of the African Union and urge it to continue documenting all atrocities committed on both sides. We look forward to the report of the United Nations Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS) on violations and abuses on the ground. As some speakers have already said, the Human Rights Council's active involvement is also essential.

It is time for the warring leaders to place the interests of their country and people above their own. We have a tiny glimmer of hope today with the announcement by President Kiir, and we urge the leaders to take advantage of this window of opportunity. The political leaders must act on their words and must stop the violence. The Security Council, for its part, must ensure that if that does not happen, we will use all the tools at our disposal to send a clear, strong message that war crimes, crimes of sexual violence and atrocities will no longer be tolerated. I understand the differences of opinion on the use of sanctions, but my delegation believes that, if nothing else works, the threat of targeted sanctions is a useful tool that must be made real and imminent if we want the warring parties to change their behaviour. Referral to the International Criminal Court should also be on the table.

Deterrence on the ground must be strengthened. We are looking into revising the UNMISS ma..date to that effect. The deployment of a regional task force to protect ceasefire monitors and deter Government and rebel forces from staging assaults is to proceed at full speed. We would like to express our appreciation to UNMISS

and to Special Representative Johnson for doing their utmost under extremely difficult circumstances.

We regret the continuing challenges in relations between the Government of South Sudan and UNMISS. The Government must stop the harassment of the United Nations Mission and its staff and make it clear to the public that it appreciates UNMISS's lifesaving role and are fully committed to cooperating and providing safety and security to its personnel, as well as to ceasing all status-of-forces agreement violations. It is totally unacceptable that a United Nations mission, carrying out vital work in extreme conditions at a risk to the lives of the peacekeepers and supported by the international community, should be attacked or abused in any way. With the growing number of crises in the world, peacekeepers and the funds for them are in ever greater demand. Countless victims of violence elsewhere would be happy to have those peacekeepers protecting them, and I think the Government of South Sudan should keep that in mind. They are doing a vital job.

In conclusion, we call our leaders "leaders" not simply because that is the only word we have, but because we expect them to show true leadership. If in future President Salva Kiir and Riek Machar want to be considered leaders by their own country, this is a moment for them to show that, to step up to that leadership and make sure that the danger of destroying the independence so hardly won just a few years ago does not become a gruesome reality.

Mr. Barros (Chile) (*spoke in Spanish*): We would like to thank the High Commissioner for Human Rights, Ms. Navanethem Pillay, and Mr. Adama Dieng, the Special Envoy for the Prevention of Genocide, for their briefings. We especially appreciate their undertaking a joint visit to South Sudan.

Chile has stated that accountability in the area of human rights must be a priority in the renewal of the mandate of the United Nations Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS). We are witnessing what could be the start of a humanitarian catastrophe, and there are strong indications that compel us to believe that genocide and crimes against humanity are taking shape in South Sudan. While there is no question that every State is responsible for protecting its people from large-scale and widespread abuses of human rights, the international community, in accordance with the concept of the responsibility to protect, as set out in the outcome document of the 2005 World Summit, is obliged to support States when they will not meet or are clearly incapable of meeting that obligation.

The Council must act rapidly. Prevention is possible and we should make use of all the early-warning mechanisms that can help us avoid the loss of more lives while also promoting dialogue between the parties. We cannot remain indifferent to the information Ms. Pillay and UNICEF gave us on 30 April on the deaths of children as a result of indiscriminate attacks on civilians, many of them internally displaced; on the recruitment of more than 9,000 children by the armed forces on both sides, which is a war crime under the Rome Statute; on the seizure of 32 schools and attacks on about 20 clinics and health centres by armed forces; and on sexual violence against girls and women.

We believe that those facts, and previous ones, that the Council has received on human rights violations and other atrocities in South Sudan, including the reports from UNMISS since the conflict broke out in December, are enough to get us started on an in-depth discussion on imposing specific sanctions on the individuals responsible. We hope that the African Union commission of inquiry can submit its report soon. We trust that there is sufficient coordination with UNMISS in order to ensure that background information and evidence are not lost, which would make accountability difficult.

We appreciate the courage and the determination of Ms. Johnson and the UNMISS staff to protect the internally displaced persons and to forge ahead with the investigation on human rights violations, despite the prevailing violence and the constant attacks and threats. As the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights did, we extend our appreciation to the peacekeeping staff from India whose actions have allowed for the protection of many civilians during the crisis.

The Council and the other bodies of the United Nations system must step up efforts to prevent a catastrophe in South Sudan, which would lead to the deterioration of the youngest State Member of the Organization. We believe that it is time for the Council to refer the background information it has on the situation in South Sudan to the International Criminal Court in order to show that we can take concrete actions to strengthen those already taken by the United Nations to protect the civilian population.

Mrs. Perceval (Argentina) (*spoke in Spanish*): Thank you, Mr. President, for convening this meeting. I also thank Ms. Navi Pillay, United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, and Mr. Adama Dieng, Under-Secretary-General Special Adviser to the Secretary-General on the Prevention of Genocide, for their briefings on their mission, which was necessary and met the essential need to convey the fact that impunity cannot and will not be tolerated.

I think that it is important that we are meeting publicly, not just because of what we can say and do today, which can help to end the hostilities and the attacks against the civilian population, but it is also important because, Argentina believes, for the purpose of accountability and transparency, this is how the meeting should be held, pursuant to the general principles established in rule 48 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure.

I would like to reiterate our support for the work and efforts that our Blue Helmets are undertaking in the United Nations Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS). Beyond any shadow of a doubt, that work has allowed us to prevent many deaths. I also want to underscore the responsibility and efforts deployed by the United Nations, together with regional and subregional bodies, aimed at stopping the crisis and mitigating so much suffering.

Argentina shares the condemnation in the strongest terms of the serious violations of human rights and international humanitarian law that have been perpetrated by both parties to the conflict in South Sudan over recent months. We appreciate that during their visit, Ms. Pillay and Mr. Dieng warned the country's leaders that the inquiries under way, or future inquiries, will inevitably examine those parties' responsibility for the war crimes and crimes against humanity being perpetrated in the country. We also believe that it is essential that they have reminded them about their responsibility to protect civilians and the need to put an end to hostilities as soon as possible to prevent the situation from worsening further.

Argentina supports the work of the African Union commission of inquiry, which is necessary if those responsible for the atrocities are to be brought to justice. We also believe that in all of the inquiries under way — be they by the African Union, UNMISS or the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights — it is extremely important to establish who is responsible at the highest levels, as it is not enough to merely punish those who undertook the heinous actions; rather, it is necessary to establish responsibility all the way up the chain of command. There is a need to put an end to impunity so that massive violations of human rights stop. However, it is also equally necessary to reach a political agreement.

On that point, encouraging news from South Sudan is scant. We note the release of the remaining 4 of the 11 detainees accused of undertaking a coup d'état, the progress with regard to the African Union's commission of inquiry and that there is still hope that the parties can truly negotiate a cessation of hostilities as they have said they are willing to do. But they need to do that, because the victims are not invisible. They should do that because death speaks. The murder of civilians, of boys and girls, women and the elderly, because of their ethnicity, the colour of their skin; the rape of women to destroy their dignity and in vengeance; the recruitment of thousands of children to lead them to death instead of bringing them to a life that is free of fear; the destruction of hospitals in order to unleash epidemics; the occupation of schools to nourish ignorance; the destruction of entire towns by those whose hands are stained with petroleum; the calls to hate aimed at stripping communities of the opportunity to learn respect for differences and love for peace — those crimes are not invisible because death speaks in Bor and Bentiu and in all corners. And we are listening.

For that reason, we too must show enormous responsibility, not just by lamenting and condemning atrocious acts and famines. Argentina believes that the Security Council should continue, as the case may be, to support, to take or to assess the following efforts as soon as possible.

First, Argentina has no doubt that the most important thing at this time is to provide all the necessary protection for the tens of thousands of individuals who have sought refuge in the hands of UNMISS and have not found protection. It is urgent that a decision be made with regard to the Secretary-General's request to increase the troop numbers of UNMISS and, in should that be approved, ensure that it is effectively done.

Secondly, we must establish what support the United Nations can provide so that the regional force that has been decided upon by the Heads of State and Government of the Intergovernmental Authority on Development can be deployed.

Thirdly, we hope that the commitment to ensure that the victims will receive justice and reparation nationally in South Sudan is not an empty promise. We trust that it is not a empty promise. However, we also wish to recall that when a country cannot or will not ensure that justice is carried out, the International Criminal Court is there. That is a mechanism that Argentina supports and defends.

Fourthly, we again condemn the actions of the Government of South Sudan and the forces loyal to them with regard to UNMISS and humanitarian assistance. Argentina believes that the activities of UNMISS must be solely focused on matters linked to the protection of civilians, human rights and humanitarian assistance. We do not believe that there is any room for the allocation of resources to other types of tasks.

In conclusion, I want to reiterate our concern about the regional repercussions that the conflict could have, in particular with regard to the presence of foreign troops in the country. I would also like to echo the question of Ms. Pillay in the press conference of 30 April: "How much worse does it have to get before those who can bring this conflict to an end, especially President Kiir and Mr. Machar, decide to do so?"

Ms. Lucas (Luxembourg) (*spoke in French*): I want to thank Ms. Navi Pillay, United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, and Mr. Adama Dieng, Under-Secretary-General Special Adviser to the Secretary-General on the Prevention of Genocide, for their poignant words, which illustrate both the gravity of the situation in South Sudan and the United Nations willingness to implement the Secretary-General's "Rights up front" initiative, which prioritizes the struggle against human rights violations with a view to preventing mass atrocities.

Luxembourg condemns in the strongest terms the attacks in Bentiu and Bor that have claimed hundreds of civilian casualties, among them many women and children. These attacks are the most recent examples of the serious violations and atrocities committed against civilians, often based on ethnicity, that have been attributed to both sides since the conflict began on 15 December 2013. Abuses against civilians have likely led to thousands of deaths. They have displaced more than 1 million people.

The South Sudanese leaders who are in dispute must finally take responsibility and stop the carnage. It is unacceptable that Government and opposition forces continue to violate the cessation of hostilities agreement of 23 January, and that the parties stubbornly refuse to engage in political negotiations. We continue to fully support the mediation efforts by the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD). We want to take this opportunity to call urgently on the parties to begin to address the substantive issues in good faith, without further delay. As the humanitarian situation continues to deteriorate, each day missed at the negotiating table increases the risk of famine for the South Sudanese people.

We strongly condemn the serious violations of human rights and international humanitarian law that continue to be committed with impunity in South Sudan. The picture painted this afternoon by Ms. Pillay and Mr. Dieng is frightening. President Salva Kiir and former Vice-President Riek Machar bear a heavy responsibility. They must absolutely publicly reject all attacks against civilians and commit to holding those who ordered or carried out the attacks to account for their actions. The fight against impunity is a priority for us. Those responsible for serious violations, including the officials who ordered, instigated, encouraged or tolerated such violations and abuses, must understand that the international community is watching, that their crimes will not go unnoticed and that they will have to answer for them.

In that regard, we welcome the publication next Monday of the final report on human rights violations of the United Nations Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS). We also welcome the launch of the commission of inquiry of the African Union, led by former Nigerian President Olusegun Obasanjo, which has just carried out its first mission to South Sudan.

That United Nations report and the investigative work of the African Union are important, but we must go further. There is no doubt that war crimes and crimes against humanity have been committed. In that context, to fight against impunity and prevent future atrocities, we believe that the Council must seriously consider a referral to the International Criminal Court.

More generally, the Security Council must consider all the means at its disposal, including the establishment of a sanctions regime, to bring the parties to see reason, cease hostilities and avoid an escalation of the situation with incalculable consequences. The adoption of targeted sanctions against those who have perpetrated violations of human rights and international

humanitarian law, violated the agreement on cessation of hostilities and impeded the progress of peace talks should be considered.

We welcome the important work carried out by UNMISS to protect civilians, especially the civilian refugees in its bases, under extremely difficult conditions. We condemn the restrictions UNMISS continues to face, the harassment of its staff and the persistent violations of the status-of-forces agreement. The Security Council should review the mandate of the Mission to focus on three priorities: the protection of civilians, facilitating the delivery of humanitarian assistance and monitoring human rights. It is also crucial to strengthen the Mission by integrating, on terms to be agreed, the forces proposed by IGAD.

Luxembourg condemns in the strongest terms the recruitment and use of children, killing and maiming of children, sexual violence, attacks against schools and hospitals and the use of schools by all parties to the conflict. We recall to the parties that they agreed under the cessation of hostilities agreement not to recruit or use children. The latest figures from UNICEF, according to which more than 9,000 children were recruited and used by parties to the conflict, are simply outrageous. We recall that, on 13 March 2012, the Government of South Sudan signed an action plan to stop and prevent the recruitment and use of children. Any violation of that action plan is a violation of obligations undertaken by the Government.

Faced with the scale of the violations committed and pursuant to Security Council resolutions on children and armed conflict, UNMISS should strengthen the monitoring and reporting of information on violations and abuses committed against children. And the Mission should be equipped with adequate resources to do so. We also encourage the commission set up by the African Union to investigate these violations and abuses.

In conclusion, I would like to assure Ms. Pillay and Mr. Dieng that we have heard their call. The Council will act firmly to eliminate the looming threat of yet more serious violence that risks spiralling out of control. It is our collective responsibility to act to prevent, 20 years on, another genocide on the African continent.

The President: I shall now make a statement in my capacity as the representative of the Republic of Korea.

I thank High Commissioner Navi Pillay and Special Adviser Adama Dieng for their briefings. We believe that the Council fully echoes their urgent call for attention and action. The ethnically targeted killings in South Sudan are unacceptable and must stop. Only a fortnight ago, the Security Council convened an open debate on the twentieth anniversary of the Rwandan genocide, and reaffirmed that never again should such events occur (see S/PV.7155). The use of radio broadcasts to incite ethnic violence is reminiscent of a prelude to that catastrophe, adding a new and dangerous dimension to the crisis. We call on both President Salva Kiir and Mr. Riek Machar to publicly state their firm opposition to any attacks against civilians as well as their commitment to seeking accountability. All political and tribal leaders in South Sudan must publicly declare their objection to violence and take responsible actions accordingly. We look forward to the final report of the United Nations Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS) on human rights violations.

With the onset of the rainy season, we are deeply concerned about the dire situation of over 1 million displaced people. The UNMISS protection of civilian sites are already overcrowded, and they were never designed to cope with the enormous task of protecting such a huge number of civilians. A comprehensive strategy for the protection of civilians should be formulated to make best use of the capabilities of UNMISS. We also encourage the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) to enhance its mediation efforts.

Intensifying battles in the oil-producing fields threaten to trigger a regional escalation of the conflict. The United Nations and IGAD need to swiftly finalize the modalities for implementing the monitoring and verification mechanism under the cessation of hostilities agreement. Only a political solution can return the situation to normalcy. The Council must be ready to take additional measures to discourage spoilers and expedite stability.

I now resume my functions as President of the Council.

I give the floor to the representative of South Sudan.

Mr. Deng (South Sudan): I thank you, Mr. President, and members of the Security Council for giving me the opportunity to address the Council on the critically important issues concerning our country. As this is the first time I address the Security Council under

the presidency of the Republic of Korea, allow me to congratulate you, Mr. President, and to assure you of our support and cooperation. I would also like to commend your predecessor for successfully steering the Council during the month of April.

My delegation and I have listened with keen interest to the deeply moving statements presented and the concerns raised this afternoon by United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights Navi Pillay, and by the United Nations Special Adviser on the Prevention of Genocide, my successor and younger brother, Adama Dieng, and the members of the Security Council. I would like to thank both the High Commissioner and the Special Adviser for having visited our country and for giving the current crisis such high priority. I want to assure them, and indeed all the members of the Council, that we sincerely appreciate and genuinely share their deep concerns and commitment to see an end to the violence.

As I have previously stated to the Council, while it is painful to listen to accounts of the tragic situation in our country, our response is not to be defensive or in denial. We recognize that the motivation behind the accounts is to help South Sudan address the crisis in cooperation with the international community. That is why we have consistently expressed our sincere appreciation to the Security Council specifically, and the international community generally, for their steadfast engagement and support.

No one who believes in the ideals of human rights and in the prevention of genocide and related atrocities can quarrel with the pleas and warnings made by the High Commissioner for Human Rights and the Secretary-General's Special Adviser on the Prevention of Genocide and by members of the Council. As I have repeatedly stated, our people struggled for decades against discrimination and gross violations of human rights. Ours was a struggle for equality and human dignity, which constitute the foundations for human rights. Those principles should guide us in building our nation.

While the tendency towards moral equivalency may be understandable as a tactic, and even a strategy, for engaging the parties on the basis of mutual recognition and respect, it risks equating rights and wrongs in a way that clouds the situation on the ground. It is of course indisputable that the Government must bear the primary responsibility for protecting its citizens without discrimination on ethnic or any other ground and be accountable in that regard. However, that cannot justify placing a democratically elected Government on the same moral, political and legal grounds as a rebel group using violence to overthrow the Government.

The President of South Sudan, Mr. Salva Kiir, told me today that he had said to the High Commissioner for Human Rights and the Special Adviser on the Prevention of Genocide that if they had time to spend in the country, he would grant them full and unhindered access to establish the scope of the violence in order to gain a deeper understanding of the situation and of who is doing what. The President also spoke to me about the constructive discussions he had with United States Secretary of State John Kerry, to whom he expressed his willingness to meet with the rebel leader Riek Machar in the interests of bringing a speedy end to the war.

We recognize that people do not take up arms to kill and risk being killed without some cause or grievance that should be addressed. That is why our Government, in particular President Kiir, has repeatedly reaffirmed his commitment to dialogue with the rebels to bring a swift end to the violence and promote peace, unity and national reconciliation.

On specific issues raised by the High Commissioner and the Special Adviser in their briefings, the allegation that both sides are recruiting child soldiers is an example of the moral equivalency that clouds the facts and of the need to place responsibility where it belongs. It is well known that since 2003 the Sudan People's Liberation Army (SPLA) has ended recruiting or deploying child soldiers. That has indeed been acknowledged by the relevant United Nations bodies, which have applauded South Sudan for that action. Although the demands of the war have recently necessitated army recruitment, especially with the defection of large numbers of soldiers to the rebels, it has not at all entailed recruiting child soldiers. As a prominent member of the Government told me recently, our problem is the reverse, namely, that we have an ageing army. In contrast to the Government, the rebel army is known for its recruiting and deploying child soldiers, its "White Army" being a notorious example.

On the issue of human rights violations in general, President Kiir has condemned it unequivocally and, in response to the recent developments, has created a high-level committee chaired by the former Chief Justice to investigate gross violations of human rights and to

hold accountable those found responsible. During the eruption of violence in Juba on 15 and 16 December, the President went as far as to say that anyone targeting members of the Nuer community in his name was against him. The Government has also welcomed and pledged support for the African Union commission of inquiry on South Sudan under the chairmanship of former President of Nigeria Olusegun Obasanjo, charged with investigating human rights violations resulting from the current crisis. That contrasts sharply with the situation of human rights on the part of the rebels, where massive abuses and ethnically targeted massacres have become a conspicuous part of their war strategy, with scarcely a condemnatory word from its leadership.

It is unfortunate that the very regrettable incident of the youth attack on the United Nations compound in Bor is being equated with atrocities committed by the rebel army in Bentiu and Malakal. The Bor incident, which was strongly condemned by the Government, was provoked with the youth of the town of Bor heard internally displaced persons in the United Nations compound celebrating the capture of Bentiu by the rebels who had only recently destroyed Bor and massacred its inhabitants. The incident was initially intended as a peaceful rally to submit a protest letter to the United Nations Mission in the Republic of South Sudan (UNMISS), requesting that the internally displaced persons be removed from Bor where they were now perceived by the youth as a source of provocation.

A peaceful protest got out of hand when the peacekeepers fired shots into the air to stop the youth from entering the camp, which was construed by the youth as an attack on them, provoking them to force their way into the camp. I would like to note that local Government authorities had informed UNMISS of the intentions of the youth to demonstrate and that the SPLA, in collaboration with UNMISS, work together to calm the situation. That is a clear indication that the Government sees UNMISS as a critical partner in South Sudan.

In Bentiu, the rebels massacred hundreds of civilians, including people who had sought shelter or refuge in churches and mosques and patients who were receiving care in hospitals, as was noted in today's briefings. That has been strongly deplored and condemned by our Government.

Before I conclude my remarks, I would like to highlight two points that I consider crucial to a constructive response to the crisis in our country.

First, we very much appreciate the concerted efforts of the international community in support of the Intergovernmental Authority on Development/African Union peace process. We would urge continued, and indeed stepped up, engagement at the highest level to accelerate an early end to this devastating and senseless violence.

Secondly, we all recognize that, after the long war in the Sudan, South Sudan has been weakened and has very limited capacity for ensuring internal peace, security and stability. Its capacity to deliver social services and generate and sustain badly needed socio-economic development is also severely constrained. That was indeed the reason for the ambitious, multifaceted support that created UNMISS. The current crisis is weakening, and indeed diminishing, the limited capacity of the State even more. It is understandable that the United Nations must reconsider it priorities in the light of the crisis, in particular to support the peace process, protect civilians, deliver humanitarian assistance and promote respect for human rights.

But South Sudan also needs support for capacity-building now, even more than it did before. Withdrawing that support, whether for lack or resources or as a punitve measure, can only compound the crisis. The United Nations needs to consider maintaining strong capacity-building, even if it is not within UNMISS. Furthermore, greater confidence-building mechanisms need to be put in place for the collaboration work between the Government of South Sudan and UNMISS. My Government continues to remain committed to working with all humanitarian actors in assisting us alleviate the dire conditions our our people. What South Sudan needs is understanding, compassion and support in building a nation that can ensure peace, security, stability and development for all its people.

Let me end with some final comments on the nature of our quest for peace. Although our country is now acutely divided, we believe that our culture is one in which conflicts can be ultimately resolved by balancing accountability with mutual accommodation, forgiveness and reconciliation. It was the pursuit of those values that made President Kiir grant amnesty to militias, mostly Nuer, and absorb them into the army, to

the extent that they eventually constituted the majority of the armed forces. Although most of them have now joined the rebellion, President Kiir continues to call on those values as the pillars of our peace process and has expressed his willingness to take any steps that would accelerate the way forward towards an end to the war.

In that connection, I would like to report that President Kiir graciously granted me permission to meet with the four detainees in Juba and the seven who had been released and placed under the protection of the Government of Kenya. All of them opposed the use of violence to overthrow the Government, but supported dialogue to address the concerns of the rebels and other opposition groups to end the war and restore peace and national reconciliation. As the President stated, one of the reasons that the charges against the four accused were eventually dropped was to foster efforts towards peace and national reconciliation.

I would like to conclude by once more reiterating our trust and deep appreciation for the understanding and unwavering support of the United Nations for our country as one united nation that aspires to be at peace with itself and to promote development and prosperity for all its people.

The President: There are no more names inscribed on the list of speakers. The Security Council has thus concluded the present stage of its consideration of the item on its agenda.

The meeting rose at 5.15 p.m.